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CURRENT COMMENT.

THIS paper is becoming discouraged and feels that it might almost as well shut up shop. Here for two years we have been trying to expound the nature and purpose of political government; to show that under the existing economic system, our bi-partisan political representation is nothing but a sham and a fraud of the first water. Just as we were making some headway and beginning to think pretty well of ourselves as popular educators, along comes Attorney-General Daugherty and takes the job off our hands. With the "Daugherty injunction" before his eyes, no citizen henceforth needs to be told what sort of institution the United States Government is. That document is an epitome of our whole system, complete and perfect. We hate like fury to be beaten so badly in our own chosen line—especially by an Ohio lawyer of the type of Dodson and Fogg—but a simple regard for truth and honesty compels us to acknowledge that the Attorney-General has done it.

IN the circumstances, therefore, there is nothing for us to do but humbly ask why this country should any longer indulge in the expensive luxury of a Congress and State legislatures. The Daugherty injunction shows that the laws which these bodies enact are a mere superfluity. The Esch-Cummins law recognizes the railway-unions; it does not forbid strikes, although an attempt was made in Congress to get an anti-strike provision into the bill. The Clayton law expressly prohibits the issuance of such an injunction as Mr. Daugherty has gotten; nothing could be more explicit than the twentieth section of this enactment. But what do Federal statutes amount to, what does the Constitution amount to, in a country that is really governed by judge-made law, improvised from day to day as required? No one objects, as far as we can see, to judge-made law, and we least of all. For our purposes and Mr. Daugherty's, the more of it the better. But do not those very purposes suggest that we should manfully do away with the costly pretence of keeping up a lot of legislative bodies that do not amount to anything?

THE Attorney-General not only showed what sort of institution government is, but also what sort of person its service demands. His bill of particulars submitted in procuring the injunction might well be republished under the title, "The Compleat Officeholder." Chadband himself could not match it for vulgar and transparent hypocrisy, and as for lies, one can only wonder how so many

could be gotten into the space available. Here are a few specimens: "The Government of the United States will never lift its hand against . . . the welfare of labour in its legitimate pursuit or deny it what it is entitled to," "I am not taking sides between the disputants," "In my judgment, this movement [for the injunction] is necessary for the protection and the preservation of the unions themselves," "The railroads . . . are trying to observe the law." In giving instances of dislocated train-service, the Attorney-General told the court that in Somerset, Kentucky, 25,000 cars of coal were stalled, and that vandals had tampered with more than 500 cars there. The New York *World* telegraphed to Somerset about this, and received the reply, "No coal-cars are tied up in Somerset; no cars have been tampered with." Such, brethren, is the officeholder, and of such is his kingdom.

THE injunction may not be made permanent; and if it be made permanent, it may undergo modification in some particulars. In any case, however, the Attorney-General's services to the cause of enlightenment will remain unimpaired. Meanwhile, the official leaders of labour are indulging in a considerable amount of recrimination and loose talk, all of which helps, probably, and is at any rate all that they can do. Brother James Duncan, first vice-president of the A. F. of L., says that the idea of a general strike can be considered only "as a last resort for maintenance of freedom." Well, but when is a "last resort" due? If this injunction has not put organized labour in the last ditch, what can? The central strike committee for the New York district advises labour to unite in an effort to "clean out this rotten Administration for all time." This is all very well as far as it goes, but will a Democratic Administration be any better? Was it any better when we had one, not so long ago?

ALL of which illustrates the great truth that what organized labour just now conspicuously needs is ideas, and ideas are a commodity which labour's leaders are as conspicuously unable to furnish, for they have none. Labour has won the strike in the coal-fields, apparently, and now the only use that it can make of its victory is to buckle in and help pay for it, which it will no doubt contentedly proceed to do. If the railwaymen win their strike, they too will at once set about helping to pay for it. We trust that these two bodies of organized labour see wherein such victories have substantially bettered their condition, for we do not. We hope they see where they will be better off for getting out of the clutches of a Republican agent of privilege like Mr. Daugherty, and getting back into the clutches of a Democratic agent of privilege like Mr. Palmer. Some day in the course of centuries it is going to dawn on labour that it loses heavily by these strikes, that capital loses as heavily, and that the one thing that never loses at all is monopoly. Monopoly has not lost a brass farthing by these strikes, nor will it; and it is monopoly, not capital, that government always backs.

IF the newspapers do not misrepresent Secretary Hoover, his plea that Henry Ford should keep his factories running reminds us of the unmarried mother who thought she should be excused for having a baby because it was such a little one. Mr. Ford decided that he would shut down rather than be gouged by coal-profiteers; and the Secretary, expostulating with him for this blow at productive industry, is reported to have said that the gouge

would come only to the inconsiderable matter of \$1.50 per car, pro-rated over the Ford output. Mr. Ford replied with promptness and energy, and apparently had the Secretary on the hip. Mr. Hoover always seemed to us to be one of the stupidest men alive, but it is almost incredible that any man should be *that* stupid; still, we have seen no correction of the dispatches or anything to indicate that they were essentially wrong. As the story stands, it is an amusing and instructive bit of testimony to the quality of the official mind and to the kind of equipment in economics that is held to be sufficient to see one through in the service of government.

"THE right to work" needs a lot of upholding, but Senator Lodge is hardly the man we should choose as its advocate. When the Senator discusses the season's strikes with some of the labour-leaders of his home State, and tells them that no man or woman "can be lawfully prevented from working, if he desires to work," he is doubtless aiming a shaft at the practice of picketing. At any rate, it is certain that he does not attribute any kind of general significance and applicability to the principle he enunciates. Just to prove this, we should like to ask the Senator if he happened to be down in West Virginia some fifty-odd years ago. We were not, but we know a man who was, and he tells us that in those times, anybody who needed coal could take his pick and dig as much as he wanted out of any hill-side. Does the Senator believe that the miners can do that to-day? And if they can not, is it picketing and such-like that prevents them from doing it? Or are they kept from exercising the right to work by some other obstacle, the legality of which the Senator has always been quite ready to defend?

JOURNALISM as she is practised had a fine exhibit last week in an Associated Press dispatch from Riga, via London, to the effect that up to last February the Soviet Government had executed 1,766,118 Russians. Of these, 6775 were professors and teachers, 8800 doctors, 355,250 "other intellectuals," and so on. The total comes to about ten per cent of the pre-war population of Russia. Now, we can not say that this yarn is a monstrous fabrication, because we do not know that it is. We do know, however, that it is ludicrously improbable, and that a decent newspaper would sift it a little before swallowing it whole. It was apparently, indeed, too much for some of the New York papers, and they did not print it. But the Providence *Journal* featured the dispatch on its front page, and the New York *Times* printed an editorial on the subject, trying pathetically hard to make itself as well as its readers believe that it believed the story. The *Times* also endeavours to make itself think that it takes stock in the other yarn about the banishment of certain Russian *litterati* to Nova Zembla; all of which confirms us in the suspicion that those Russian concessions must have been withdrawn. Our idea of a real literary treat would be to behold the man who writes those editorials for the *Times*, for the sort of intellect that produces them is beyond our imagination.

THE news of the latest development of the Government's Russian policy came to the American people over the wireless from Moscow. It appears that the State Department has been sounding M. Krassin to learn whether or not Mr. Hughes might send a sort of economic slumming-expedition to Russia. M. Krassin replied that Russia would be glad to receive such a commission if the Soviet Government were permitted to send a similar commission to the United States. Thereupon the State Department announced that the whole plan had been called off, and the news-dispatches from Washington intimated that the Department feared that a Soviet commission might attempt to spread revolutionary propaganda in our contented land. Mr. Hughes has repeatedly asserted that he could not recognize the Russian Government until Russia had achieved an appropriate degree of productivity. It would seem that the visit of a Russian economic

commission ought therefore to be encouraged, in that it would enable the backward Slavs to profit by our splendid example. Perhaps, however, Mr. Hughes is wise to hold off a bit until we have achieved a higher technique in mining coal by bayonet and conducting transportation by injunction.

It is noteworthy and interesting that Americans heard nothing on this subject from their own Government until Mr. Hughes's hand was forced by Krassin's publication of the substance of his reply. It was then admitted at Washington that advances had been made; and it was admitted also that one of the chief reasons for this action was the apprehension that the citizens of other countries were walking off with everything worth having in the way of concessions in Russia. The American Government has attempted to hold the Governments of Europe to a policy of total abstinence in this matter, but the frequent reports of the granting of concessions have at last aroused a suspicion, somewhere in Washington, that the State Department can not blockade Russia against the world.

It is hard to see how anything could be more reasonable than the attitude of the Soviet Government, as revealed in Krassin's reply to Mr. Hughes. Our diplomats have of course been somewhat embarrassed by the public rejection of their secret proposal in its original form; but this hardly justifies the declaration of the Department of State that the incident is closed. The original proposal amounted to an admission of the fatuousness of the policy of non-intercourse; and certainly there is nothing in the attitude of the Soviet Government that justifies a return to a policy already half repudiated. However, there are indications that the relapse may not be complete, for on the day following the publication of the official announcement that negotiations were off, the Associated Press said, "The President was represented to-day by officials as regarding with favour a renewal, in some measure, of trade-relations between the United States and Russia." Thus there seems to be a certain amount of restlessness at Washington; and while there is the smallest sign of life, there is hope.

We should be very glad indeed to see all political obstacles removed, and a whole army of American concessionaires turned loose in Russia, for we have a hunch that the Soviet Government knows how to convert these gentlemen into useful members of society. A dispatch from Moscow reports that an American oil-man who had failed to secure any sort of concession by purchase, was recently offered the opportunity to exploit one of the largest fields in the region of Baku on a contract-basis, with the provision that the title to the land should remain with the Government. This is something like! In fact, it encourages us mightily, for we believe that a Government that is wise enough to adopt this policy in a single instance, must be too wise to let the other natural resources of the country slide into the maw of private monopoly.

In an appreciation of the brand of administration furnished from Washington under the present auspices, a Porto Rican editor complains that that island is ruled by thieves, imbeciles and drunkards. Probably his protest is well-founded, but since one of the collateral purposes of imperialism is to relieve the home taxpayer of the burden of supporting a certain number of political scoundrels, incompetents and wastrels, we doubt that a change in the administrative personnel would greatly benefit the Porto Ricans. Their misfortune is primarily geographical, and since they can not shift their island to the opposite side of the earth, all they can do is sit tight and pray diligently for a complete new economic dispensation in the United States. Meanwhile, by occasionally calling attention to their sorry plight, they will materially assist in the educational progress of the American people concerning political government and imperialism.

ONCE more the Premier of France has marched up the hill (but not all the way up), and down again (but not all the way down). M. Poincaré has threatened to seize the German national forests, and the State coal-mines of the Ruhr; but there have been no seizures. The Reparations Commission has granted Germany what amounts to a moratorium; but the French Government has reserved the liberty to act as it pleases, or to throw Germany into a ruinous panic once more, by threatening to act. M. Poincaré's Government lacks the courage to do either the right thing or the wrong thing with vigour, but it still manages to make trouble enough to keep Europe worrying along the road toward ruin.

THE French royalists are dissatisfied with this poor dying rate of destruction. Among all the enemies of Germany, they alone are acting with any kind of foresight. When the Government faints and falters, they bark at its heels, and urge it forward again towards the Rhine. The royalists believe, as many of the republicans do also, that Germany must be partitioned and reduced generally to economic and political wreckage; but unlike the republicans, they foresee clearly the results that the ruin of Central Europe must produce in France, and they view the prospect with high hope. Industry and commerce, they believe, are the foundation of republicanism; if the foundation crumbles, the political structure will fall; Europe will return to an agricultural economy, and the French monarchy will rise again upon the solid footing of a peasant population. In that great day, isolation and self-sufficiency will characterize the economy of France, and those industries which survive will find their future chiefly in the development of a market among the peasantry of the nation. According to M. Joseph Caillaux, who writes on "Nationalism versus the Nation" in *Le Progrès Civique*, these are the anticipations of the royalists who, unlike the republican nationalists, are not going aimlessly about the business of destruction, with no notion of what they are up to.

MEANWHILE the ancient and inveterate enmity between France and England is becoming exacerbated. The English press, with few exceptions, is particularly bitter against M. Poincaré's reply to the Balfour note, as tending to stir up bad feeling between the United States and England, and as betraying ingratitude for all that England did for France in the war. To our mind, this latter plea, characteristic as it is, is rather good, we must say. England fomented and encouraged the war, her diplomacy pressed forward with unceasing diligence the policy which brought it about, and she emerged from the war carrying off everything portable from the enemy loot. Under the circumstances, it strikes us that there is precious little claim for consideration in what England did for France during the war.

MR. MELLON, Secretary of the Treasury, does not entertain the view that was expressed recently by Earl Balfour in his note regarding international debts. Perhaps the difference is rather academic than practical. What we are interested in, however, is the terms upon which some of the loans were made. If Great Britain borrowed from us, say at three-and-one-half per cent, and then re-loaned the money to her allies, say at five per cent, or loaned at that rate other funds released by her borrowings from us, the transactions would have an interest—no pun intended—even keener than that which it now bears. We do not know anything about the terms of these loans, and have never heard them discussed; so we merely suggest that this aspect of them is possibly worth notice.

ALTHOUGH the Prince of Wales certainly lost "the duel for popularity" to which he challenged Mahatma Gandhi a few months ago, it seems, nevertheless, that the Indian non-coöperation movement has recently failed somewhat in vigour. The best proof of this is to be found in the

increase in India's consumption of British-made cotton goods. The trade in these goods was at one time greatly reduced by the non-coöperators' boycott, but it is now reported that exports from Manchester to India have returned to something like their normal volume. This does not mean that the Indians have learned to love the English; it means simply that the hand-spinners and weavers of India can not hold out against the machine. Whether we like it or not, the cause of craftsmanship is a lost cause in India and China, as well as in Europe and America. If the processes of machine-production can not be made interesting as well as profitable for the worker, the loss entailed by the decline of the crafts is irremediable. As Rodin says, "This can not be a good world until every man has the soul of an artist; that is, until every man finds satisfaction in his work."

MR. WILL H. HAYS has said very aptly that the motion-picture industry affords the best means of "selling America" to the world, and now a visitor from Australia informs us that as far as that country is concerned, Mr. Hays is right. In an address to America which appeared recently in the *New York Times*, the traveller from the antipodes discusses at some length the spiritual influence which this country now exercises in his part of the world. "You have so much to teach," he says to us. "You have so much that is new, progressive, thought-compelling and inspiring." The items to which he gives most prominence are, first, "film-amusement and instruction"; second, popular songs which retail "the glories of Tennessee, Michigan, Dixie, Kentucky, Louisiana, Ohio, Mississippi, Broadway, 'I'll be in N'York,' Virginia, Baltimore and all the rest of your country"; third, "platform-artists"; fourth, the works of playwrights and composers upon whom the Australians depend "for at least sixty per cent of their entertainment." Without stopping to take breath, our visitor says, "Of Australian motorists, about seventy-five per cent depend on American motor-cars, about sixty per cent on American benzine (your 'gas'), and thirty per cent on American tyres (your 'tires')." By way of winding up his article, he says, "You have a catchy song entitled 'Ain't We Got Fun?' This 'goes big' in Australia."

FROM these embarrassing revelations in the *Times*, we turn to a recent issue of the Viennese paper, *Reconstruction*, and there we find a discussion of the plan to build at Salzburg a great "Festival Theatre." "It will differ from all other theatres," says the writer, "even the Shakespeare Memorial, because it will be simply and purely international; plays and operas by the greatest of dead and living dramatists and composers of all nationalities will be presented by the greatest of all actors and singers of all lands." This article and the one by the Australian represent the upper and lower levels of a cosmopolitanism that surpasses every sort of nationalism in the range of its possibilities. The Australian is right when he seeks out those things that he wants, wherever they may be found; and the Austrian is right, when he acts on the principle that the man who wants the best can never be satisfied with the offerings of any one nation.

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TOPICS OF THE TIME.

OUTSIDE THE FAST-CLOSED DOOR.

THE ordinary mundane agencies of cable and wireless seem to be bringing us no news of the Far Eastern conference, now considerably overdue, and we are wondering whether it will be necessary to employ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to get in touch with that important convocation. According to the schedule, the Japanese forces were to evacuate Vladivostok by 26 August; and immediately thereafter the representatives of the Far Eastern Republic, the Russian Government and the Imperial Japanese Government were to get together to discuss a peaceable settlement of the Siberian problem, including terms for the permanent withdrawal of Japan from Siberia, in accordance with her repeated pledges since the beginning of the occupation. Up to the present writing it would seem that both evacuation and conference have gone glimmering.

The idea of international conferences has been pretty thoroughly discredited by the political mountebankery of the past few years, yet the Russians and the Japanese have certain definite matters to settle, and they can come to an understanding only by discussing them across the table. Efforts to reach an agreement were made last year at Dairen, but from the start the Japanese negotiators acted as if they had acquired a proprietary interest in Eastern Siberia; and since the Siberians evinced no interest in signing documents that would make their country virtually a dependency of Japan, the affair came to naught.

The Far Easterners then took their case to the Washington conference, one of the purposes of which was supposed to be the settlement of questions pertaining to the Asiatic shores of the Pacific; but all they got from the tired business diplomats at that farcical gathering was a severe snubbing. During the past year, however, a great deal of water has run under the bridges of the Volga. The Russian Soviet Government has survived a severe crisis. The Far Eastern buffer State has continued to knit the scattered eastern-Siberian population together, in spite of the insidious efforts at disintegration employed by the Japanese and their subsidized bandit-chieftains. In short, the position of Japan in Siberia, which from the time Japanese troops were first landed in August, 1918, never had a rag of moral justification to cover it, has become increasingly uncomfortable physically. It is plain that sooner or later the island-imperialists must negotiate, and therefore the question which most concerns them is that of securing a handsome *quid pro quo* for their withdrawal.

As a hungry imperialist Power, the United States has a decided interest in this withdrawal, and in strengthening the hands of the Siberians. The Far Eastern Republic has an area one-third as great as that of our own country, and is rich in mineral wealth and timber. Its population is only two million. Its natural resources offer an unusually attractive field for foreign exploitation. As long as Japan holds all the gateways to this profitable paradise, eager American concessionaires may merely stand and whistle outside the reservation.

Yet beyond a single feeble gesture at the Washington conference, our State Department has made no move to open this door. The Far Eastern Republic, which may be a highly necessary friend in some future day of imperialist need, has been completely ignored by Mr. Hughes. For many months its representatives

have been sitting in Washington looking wistfully at the doors of the State Department, but no official has so much as nodded to them. Mr. Hughes's intractable prejudice against all things Russian, except under a Tsarist dispensation, is apparently the reason for this coolness. Soviet Russia is friendly with the Far Eastern Republic; therefore we can have no dealings with it.

Yet the Far Eastern Republic has adopted neither sovietism nor communism. Its popular assembly is elected not on an occupational, but on a territorial basis, a system well enough, as step-father Lenin doubtless conceded, for a sparse rural population. The sacred right of private property is preserved most specifically in the Constitution, which was written in large measure by a Russian who had spent most of his adult life as a Chicago lawyer. The author apparently had considerable familiarity with written constitutions, and perhaps he was familiar with some particularly horrible example, for he seems to have brought to his task a knowledge of certain things to be rigorously avoided. We find no provision for an agency of irresponsible judicial finality, or anything approaching it. On the other hand, in the matter of guarantees of personal liberty, the Constitution goes into details and reiterations which would indicate that these Siberian founding fathers were determined to leave no possible excuse for unworthy descendants to misinterpret them. Surely this is sufficiently explicit:

Citizens shall not be prosecuted for the free expression of their opinions . . . The right of workers to strike is hereby declared, and such right shall in no wise be restricted by the State . . . The personal liberty, the dwellings and the correspondence of all citizens are declared to be inviolable . . . No citizen shall be punished without a trial. No citizen shall be arrested or imprisoned, nor shall a search be effected either of his person or his home . . . except . . . only on presentation of a warrant duly issued by a court. An exception to this law is allowed only when an arrest is effected in *flagrante delicto* . . . Without the consent of the householder no person shall enter any dwelling except in response to an appeal for help and in order to give that help, or in case of accident, or in execution of the orders of a court . . . Censorship of mails, and of telegraphic and telephonic communication is forbidden.

Yet in this document we find an important provision that would seemingly justify Mr. Hughes in not seeing the representatives of the Far Eastern Republic as he passes by. It is this: "Private ownership of land, forests, natural resources, waterways and their resources within the territory of the Far Eastern Republic is for ever abolished. . . . The general and fundamental basis of the right to use land is personal labour." This, of course, is wholly at variance with the best usages of civilized countries, which follow the time-honoured rule that natural resources should gravitate to the speculator and the monopolist as rapidly as possible. In this matter Mr. Hughes may be depended on to put aside questions of international expediency in favour of a sacred principle; and so it may be a long time before we begin sending friendly notes to the Government of the Far Eastern Republic, setting forth the desires of our bankers and concessionaires as the conditions of recognition. Meanwhile the Japanese Government may be expected to take a more opportunist attitude. If its imperial purposes can be more comfortably served by an arrangement with the Russians and Siberians, it is not likely to let a little matter of economic orthodoxy stand in the way. Japanese concessionaires are no doubt fortunate that their Government has no Puritan complex to interfere with business.

EASY MONEY.

A REMARKABLE feature of strikes that cripple the public services and threaten a break-down of our whole industrial fabric is the general assumption that they are controversies between capital and labour which can be settled by mutual agreement. Yet the simplest analysis of the situation shows that the wealth produced by the co-operation of employers and workmen has a third claimant who, as the receiver of rent, takes precedence of the producers. The success with which the landlord escapes observation is perhaps largely due to the fact that he is so often hidden in the corporation that figures as capitalist in the apparent class-struggle. But this is by no means always the case; and when, as in the anthracite coal-fields, rent is paid to people who take no part in the operation of the industry, it is immediately evident what becomes of the wealth produced by the working forces. Readers of Mr. Richard Spillane's column in the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* of 25 August, were informed that about twenty per cent of the anthracite mines are operated under leases, and that the Girard estate is the largest owner of the leased lands. It is estimated that in some instances the royalty paid to this estate exceeds two dollars a ton. "And it goes up every year," adds Mr. Spillane, "and will continue to go up unless some action is taken to upset the system." Operators of leased lands pay from fifteen to twenty-eight per cent royalty on the cost of the coal at the mines, and as the leases fall in the rates are raised.

Mr. Spillane does not suggest a way of escape from the exactions of the landlord; but Mr. John Codman has already performed that service for readers of this paper. In his excellent discussion of the liberation of industry, which appeared in the *Freeman* of 23 August, Mr. Codman suggested that if the State of Pennsylvania, instead of placing a tax on each ton of coal mined, and thus discouraging production, would substitute a tax on the privilege of mine-owning, it might succeed in loosening the grip of monopoly. In fact, a chain of consequences would be started that would revolutionize the coal-mining industry. In the first place, to divert the rent of the coal-lands into the public treasury through the machinery of taxation, would be to assert the common right of the people to the natural resources of the State. Secondly, such a policy would stimulate competition among operators, who, being deprived of the advantages of monopoly, or freed from its exactions, as the case might be, would turn their energies to the business of producing an increased output at lower prices. Increased activity among mine-operators would result in a greater demand for labour, steady employment and better wages.

It may appear to make small difference to the operators whether they pay rent to the State or to individuals; but if the State received these sums, it would have no valid excuse for levying burdensome taxes on buildings, machinery, profits; and the operators might be left free to enjoy the full returns on their ingenuity and enterprise. Thus the benefits of such a system would extend to the capitalist, the labourer and the consumer. The only sufferer from the change would be the landlord, who contributes nothing to the enterprise. The Girard estate, for instance, would no longer receive an income from the privilege of land-ownership.

Although the argument for the restoration of natural resources to the people is not yet acceptable to the politicians, it has a way of bobbing up before them with embarrassing frequency. It came up in the hous-

ing-crisis, and achieved a partial lifting of the burden on industry through the exemption of new dwellings from taxation for a term of years. The building-activity which has followed wherever this policy was adopted, has helped to demonstrate the soundness of the proposal to substitute rent for taxes as public revenue. Now the argument for the common right to the earth is heard again in a dispute which has arisen over the coal-lands of Pennsylvania. A suit brought by Mr. Frank C. Reese against the Schuylkill County Commissioners to compel them to assess the coal-lands at the same time as other real estate is about to come before the supreme court of the State, and the disclosures concerning the assessments on coal-lands which Mr. Reese has already made in a series of articles in the *Pottsville Republican*, have spurred the assessors to action.

A great many of the State's coal-lands, it seems, are not on the assessors' books at all, while others are assessed at a purely nominal figure. Near the town of New Philadelphia, for instance, 934 acres of "practically virgin coal area," worth about \$15 million, are assessed at \$500,000. In another township a bed of coal 209 feet thick and a thousand feet deep, extending for three-fifths of a mile, is assessed as barren land at one per cent of its value. Mr. Reese would raise the assessment of coal-lands in Schuylkill County from \$53 million to two billion dollars. The Commissioners, according to the news-dispatches, are daily announcing large increases in assessments. In Ashland the increase is from \$700,000 to \$8,900,000, and in Blythe township from \$3,800,000 to \$42 million.

The question of assessment is of interest because it brings out the value of the natural resources that are treated as private property. No doubt if coal-owning corporations were assessed on the same basis as other owners of real estate, their contributions to the treasury would make possible a scaling down of the tax-rate; but their monopoly would not be broken until they were obliged to surrender enough of the rent to make it unprofitable to withhold their lands from use. This consummation could not long be delayed, if once the nature of land-monopoly were clearly understood; and anything that tends to illuminate the subject is worthy of notice. During the coal-crisis in England in 1918-19, Mr. Robert Smillie performed a service of enlightenment by questioning the validity of the titles under which the coal-lands were held. We commend the discussions that took place before the Sankey Commission to the attention of American leaders of organized labour. Perhaps if these gentlemen could be brought to understand the real nature of the problem which manifests itself in periodic disputes between labourers and their employers, they would be less inclined to regard Government-monopoly as a panacea for all industrial ills.

This paper has already expressed its hope that the Government will be forced to take over the mines and railways; not because we believe that this would be a good thing for industry or for the public, but because we believe it would be the worst thing that could possibly happen. There is a very large number of people besides the leaders of organized labour who have failed to learn from the country's experience with Governmental agencies of one kind or another, that the very worst way to manage the nation's economic affairs is to entrust them to the hands of incompetent bureaucrats. Perhaps this faith in political agencies can be destroyed in no other way than through the disastrous experiment of Government-monopoly of industry.

From a practical viewpoint, of course, to exchange private monopoly for Government-monopoly would be a poor bargain, for it would simply multiply a thousand-fold the evils of bureaucracy. No new avenues of employment would be opened to relieve the competition among workers. Strikes would take on the sinister character of civil war. Capital and labour would both have reason to feel that their rights were disregarded, and the consumer would pay an uncertain amount in taxes for inefficient and wasteful management, whatever his apparent saving in commodity prices.

It ought, of course, to be the business of Governments to keep the field open for fair and free competition, removing every legal restraint upon the will to co-operate in the production and distribution of wealth. But political government is, by its very nature, intent upon safeguarding the privileges of an exploiting class, and it will grant to the exploited population just so much economic freedom as it is forced to grant by insistent popular demand, and no more. The facts brought to light in the controversy between the miners and the operators, indicating the depressing effect of land-monopoly on both interest and wages, may help to formulate this demand, and in the measure that it accomplishes this, it will help to hasten the emancipation of production from the exactions of the monopolists.

IN DURANCE VILE.

OF all the entertainments provided for the diversion of city-dwellers, there is none more ancient than the menagerie. The same impulse which prompted the citizens of Imperial Rome to stand agape before strange fauna newly imported from Africa, is responsible for the crowds which daily collect in the zoological gardens of New York, Berlin, London. Small wonder that it should be so! Could anything possibly be more fascinating for man, the most inquisitive of animals, than to be able to observe at close quarters and at his leisure all the multifarious and extraordinary creations which have been evoked by nature to share his existence upon the earth?

In such places, "the pathos of difference" which differentiates *homo sapiens* from all other breathing things is thrown into startling relief; and not always, be it said, is the contrast in favour of human beings. There is a certain dignity, a certain natural grace about these caged animals, which from an æsthetic point of view compares well enough with the motley, straw-hatted throngs who so nonchalantly peer and pry at them through the bars. If a lion or leopard could reason, what contempt he would surely feel for these obese, tender-skinned bipeds, denuded almost entirely of tooth and claw, whose subtle, cruel brains have rendered them the undisputed masters of the planet. How clean and fresh his own manner of life would seem in comparison with human characteristics; a manner of life altogether unassociated with that artificial litter which so inevitably gathers about the heels of human beings whenever they gather into crowds.

Of course the contrast is most obvious when one visits the circus. At these shows, directly descended from the gladiatorial amphitheatres of ancient Rome, the advantage that attends upon the possession of an ounce more of brain-matter becomes apparent, as we watch the noblest animals dance attendance on a half-score of vulgar, pale-faced men in evening clothes. It is as though we came to review the spectacular subjection of a proud and haughty race. No antic is too ignominious for these prisoners to perform. Elephants

must kneel, must lie on their sides, must raise their left hind legs, once, twice, thrice, in perfect unison. Horses must learn to trip it, with nimble hoof, to this or that minuet, and it is necessary for bears to engage, for mockery's sake, in pastimes far removed from their natural desires.

But even though the bodies of these beasts have been broken to obedience by a hundred painful contrivances, it becomes quite clear to an observant spectator, as the performance proceeds, that their intractable hearts are even yet not altogether subdued. "Look at a lion at the moment when the trainer ceases to crack his whip and turns his back. In a flash another self has possessed him: in his glance, in his furtive gesture you perceive the King of beasts once more. The sawdust of the circus has become the sand of the desert; twenty thousand years have rolled back in the twinkling of an eye."

It is true of course that certain animals take more kindly to such enforced humiliations than others. Seals, for example, those agile, slippery denizens of the northern seas, will gladly play at ball for hours together; and poodle dogs also, bright degenerates of a distinguished species, will race back and forth in a veritable ecstasy of gymnastic achievement.

It is curious to observe how, even in captivity, certain animals with an almost Hebraic tenacity will follow out as far as possible their natural habits and customs. Meat, at the appointed hour, is thrown into the lion's cage. The hungry animal must needs spend several minutes in licking the red joint with his rough tongue. It is as near as he can get to the practice of his progenitors who, time out of mind, as often as they killed, whether zebra, buck or buffalo, stood drinking the hot flowing blood before ever they tasted the flesh.

One gives a banana to a monkey. In a trice he is up and away, and riding upon the highest trapeze, as it were in the topmost branches of a tree, safe from molestation. It is odd to note how monkeys more than any other animal seem to capture the imaginations of human beings. Their cages are always surrounded by crowds of astonished onlookers, whose eyes with concentrated absorption follow each of their movements. They watch the chimpanzee crying out grotesquely with trumpet lips; they stand spellbound before the orang-outangs, as they wallow upon the dusty floor.

Fortunate it is for the hippopotamuses, as they enter and re-enter their miserable tanks and browse on the bales of dry hay provided for them, that they are incapable of remembering the lovely inland lakes where they once lolled and basked in freedom. Never again will they walk upon the bottom of deep, lukewarm pools, never again will they feel the hot, tropical sunshine beating down upon swamps where the green rushes grow, oozing and pressed flat by the weight of their enormous feet. Yet in the silence of the night, when the crowds have gone and the moonlight slants down upon the dark floor of their restricted dwelling-place, can it really be possible that their dull, flat ugly skulls contain no recollection whatever of the long moonlight excursions they were wont to take, across the dew-drenched African veldt under Scorpio and the Southern Cross?

Undoubtedly it is the birds that are happiest in captivity. What a relief it is to enter the aviary! Here, at last, it is possible to forget the look in that tiger's eye as with padded paw he paced, up and down, and to and fro, against the bars. There is a frivolous superficiality about these winged vertebrates, their crest-

ed heads seem incapable of harbouring sombre thoughts. Land-birds and water-birds alike, they scream and chatter and flit now here, now there. It suffices them if they can display their painted plumage, dabble their beaks in a pan of water, and peck at seeds.

The reptiles are at ease for other reasons. As long as they are allowed to lie somnolent for hours together, they make no demands upon life. Nothing, indeed, in the whole world can present the illusion of quietude, of absolute stillness, as does a group of knotty, dragon-backed crocodiles. It is exactly as though, as they lie together head upon back, some magician had changed them into lifeless stone; as though they had suddenly become petrified and would remain so throughout all eternity.

If there be any man who has it in him, because of a too long sojourn amidst the commonplace manifestations of city life, to question the unconfined nature of the Creator's imagination, let him once more visit a Zoological Garden. What fabulous extravagance of conception, what fantastic ingenuity, what delicate craft, will be presented to his wondering eyes! Could the wildest dream of a modern artist have designed, for example, so bizarre an animal as a giraffe, with its elongated telegraph-pole of a neck, with its pard-like hide, and docile eyes? Or what genius would have dared to crown the nose of a rhinoceros with a horn, or, for that matter, stretch out the nostrils of an elephant to a length which if not ludicrous and unseemly is to say the least of it, unexpected?

STRUTTING, FRETTER OBERAMMERGAU.

In a world growing daily more urbanized, with art and drama always migrating to a few large centres, one looks with eager interest towards any expression of the folk-spirit, in rural surroundings. Of course there are constantly, in Europe, celebrations of the people, ranging all the way from festivals of saints' days to that most pretentious production by village dwellers, the Passion Play at Oberammergau.

We found with delight a sincere celebration of the Dante sexcentenary among unschooled, working-class Italians; we enjoyed the spirit of zest and jollity, the refreshing vulgarity and the skill, with which twenty thousand Slovak peasants who had come together for a national celebration in a small Moravian town, threw themselves into the folk-dances and folk-games; and then we went to Oberammergau to see the Passion Play which, every ten years, draws people from all over the world to see simple villagers portray the last days in the life of Christ.

There is some spontaneity at Oberammergau—in the unguarded comments of the villagers. "Outsiders think everything is peaceful and easy here, but underneath things aren't what they seem. We didn't want to give the play this year. We wanted to wait till 1930, because we're so crippled by our war-losses—sixty-seven of the players died, sixteen from the orchestra alone—and because everything is so unsettled. But the Government urged us to give it because of the *Gewerbeschau* [German Industrial Fair] in Munich, so that the Passion Play might bring people to the Fair. There are other unpleasant things for the people of Oberammergau. We are persecuted." "Persecuted! How?"

"When we go outside, even Bavarians are jealous and angry at us, because Oberammergau is making a little money out of the play. They don't realize that they gain from it too, because the play brings people to Germany, who go other places than here, too."

This and other villagers' comments, as well as the hypothetical defence against the accusation of commercialism, in the preface to the official textbook, prepared us a little for the commercialism which so increasingly depresses one at Oberammergau. For, alas! it is not the spontaneous villagers' play that tradition and the Thomas Cooks of the world have taught people to believe. Instead, it is an amateur performance, jellied into what may have seemed simple dramatic art twenty or forty years ago, but which now seems to the eye trained by Mr. Robert Edmond Jones—or even the Follies!—a fussy production, mid-Victorian in flavour, elaborately and stiffly acted in the elocution of the "cuff-showing-gesture" period, and there are eight interminable hours of it! (Imagine, modern play-

wrights, an eight-hours chance at an audience scared into staying through, by the fear of seeming sacrilegious or without "culture"!)

The villagers' ideals of simplicity in the performance seem, to the modern eye, sheer affectation. The hard and fast rules against the use of theatrical make-up have spurred the men in the caste to grow substitutes for wigs and false beards; and nature often does this work unbecomingly, and sometimes grotesquely. For the hair of the women, kids and curling-irons are taboo; but obviously tight braiding into many pigtails to remove straightness is enough of the period of the acting to seem to the villager unartificial. In the chief scene where naturalness would have counted both for realism and for faithfulness to sacred art on canvas—the scene of the Crucifixion—Anton Lang as Christ was modestly dressed in pink tights—substantial, German pink tights!

However, it must not be supposed that the audience was unmoved by the play. Grown men blew their noses loudly. A doughty German near us slept audibly, but awoke at intervals to weep, and to mutter "*Prachttvoll!*" The play was followed with religiosity. Many people were evidently quite sincerely touched at times. Yet for the most part there were marked evidences of a merely perfunctory interest. It was not only the children who wriggled; many spectators seemed largely engaged in restlessly adjusting the pillows they had brought along. Instead of a breathless absorption in the play, there was much assiduous reading of the uninteresting text, with occasional glances at the stage; and those who did not read were made conscious of the length of the printed page by that regular accent, the sibilance of leaf-turning.

What is this play which people come from all quarters of the globe to see? The story seems to have been written by a seventeenth-century theological controversialist, more interested in showing how incidents in the life of Christ were foretold in the sufferings of Job and other events in the Old Testament, than in presenting an interesting personality, either human or divine; more zealous to express race-prejudice by white-washing Pontius Pilate and placing the blame for the Crucifixion on the Jewish elders and people, than in dramatizing the life of Jesus or presenting his philosophy. The few incidents selected from the life of Christ are treated elaborately but hardly dramatically.

Why do people appear to like the play? There are, of course, reasons for this. The first is a childlike faith in the tradition that it is "different," something done by the villagers and peasants alone. (But it is a sad commentary on the world's taste that something better is not expected.) Secondly, many people have spent hard-earned money to get to Oberammergau, and can not bear to let their disappointment come to the surface of their consciousness. Thirdly, the very name of Christ suggests a feeling of awe, which creates for the audience the illusion that they are actually seeing their Lord—a psychological illusion, created wholly in their own minds and not springing from the play or the acting. Fourthly, because the play's infrequency makes it unusual—like a night-blooming cereus or a century plant, but without the spontaneity of either.

The back-drop, badly painted and badly creased, which cuts from view the green Bavarian highlands, symbolizes the whole nature of the performance. The most natural touches were the sweet-voiced birds which every now and then flew singing into the hall, and—a close second to these in pleasantness—some of the singing of the villagers. There were a few excellent voices, though the music in itself was seldom interesting.

Of course, it was its fame, and the tourists, that gave to the play its greatest artificiality; that changed it from a real out-of-door play to a performance in an ugly barnlike hall, that the audience might not be rained on. The one strip of open sky, reminiscent of the days of simplicity, is unfortunately a real detriment, since it makes a blinding glare, leaving the central part of the stage in murky obscurity and adding discomfort to the eight-hour endurance-test of the audience. This has become a play for tourists. "Lots of the peasants living near here in the country," said one villager, "would like to come, but it is too expensive, they can't afford it. It used to be in old, old times that people came from the country all round, but now it is only foreigners, and the Germans who made money in the war, and a few other rich Germans, who can come. Of course all the people of the village can come; they have to act in it."

"Have to?"

"Yes. Otherwise they wouldn't get any tickets, and couldn't have the tourists stay at their houses. They would lose a lot of money that way. Not that we make much as it is, but it is better than nothing, with everything so dear, now."

There is no place in Oberammergau for a disbeliever in Passion Plays. One wonders what would happen to an atheist there. Training for the play is practically compulsory, and be-

gins at the age of six. Everybody in the village—so runs the tale—knows the play by heart. The real wonder, then, is not that the villagers can do this play, but that they can not do something better, with good sturdy material, isolation from the contamination of the theatrical traditions of the cities, and generations of rehearsals!

If the play were really the natural artistic expression of artisans and peasants, with real crudeness and simplicity untouched by the formal stage-conventions of any period; or if the play itself were so good that it could survive the tawdry setting, or could inspire the actors to acting that had a rare quality of realness or spiritual dignity; then the world might make its decennial pilgrimage to Oberammergau with sincerity. To save the Passion Play, however, the tourists would really have to be eliminated, for they have brought it indoors from the meadows. But, after all, is the play worth saving?

VIOLA I. PARADISE AND HELEN CAMPBELL.

CONCERNING THOREAU'S STYLE.

THOREAU alluded to Parnassus as casually as he talked of Fairhaven Hill; and even Cambridge, where the Muses then were lisping in unimpassioned numbers, was no nearer to Walden Pond than the Castalian spring. He climbed Wachusett, Monadnock, Graylock, Washington, and even ventured to the summit of Katahdin when that region was a pathless forest; but alas! he caught only fleeting glimpses of the snowy Parnassian summit as he struggled among the fir trees on the upper slopes. Thoreau's disciples hotly resist a vulgar suspicion that their god sat on his pedestal less squarely than Locke, Bacon, or perchance Diogenes. They conceive him—not extravagantly—in heroic proportions. But if the testimony of his less imaginative contemporaries may be accepted, and if the grit, sand, and sharp edges of his style indicate the man, he was indeed an awkward, clumsy, gauche, blunt fellow who loved the singing of the wind in telegraph-wires but could not match it in his writing. Melville and Hawthorne were stylists; there was a classical purity in Lowell's prose, and urbanity in the essays of Holmes. Thoreau had skill and vitality; but as Mrs. Hawthorne remarked with disdain of his skating on the Concord River, his curves showed little grace.

One likes him so. There is the smell of New England earth in Thoreau's style, and occasional reflections of placid ponds. It is wild. It is as real as nature, and as imperfect, as prodigal, as varied. Like the wild apple trees of which he wrote in the *Atlantic*, it is gnarled, knotty, tough; it blunts the edge of the ax and bends the teeth of the saw; and on the hearth it glows with sustained heat. It does not smack of the perfunctory, cataloguing literary quality which genteel out-door literature so often possesses.

Considering the nature of the man and the quality of his experience, it is not strange that Thoreau's best-written book came first, and his best-thought work came last; for, as his philosophy ripened, his literary style toughened. Perhaps the pedantic exhortations of Professor Goodwin were still ringing in his ears when, at the age of twenty-two, he returned from the voyage on the Concord and Merrimac rivers, and during the next ten years, while he worked and re-worked over "The Week"—a book for all the world like his own Musketaquid in April; swollen, flooding meadows and woodlots, opening into bays and deep lagoons which conceal its course, and withal quite innocent of current. What a book for matter-of-fact Occidentals! Even now, after years of criticism and rodomontade, it defies a single reading. Thoreau never wrote more felicitously, more divinely. The summit of Parnassus is but little higher up. Pages of it are among the best in American literature, despite

the fact that the sentences, like most of Thoreau's sentences, are seldom finely turned. Like the home-made craft in which he made the voyage, they are well-freighted and remain right side up, carrying their cargo safely to port through heavy seas and by roundabout routes; but, as he observed of that rude craft, they are not as light-winged as the waterfowl. Yet it was in those pages that he unburdened his heart of "Friendship," in smoothly-joined sentences. There, for once, the meaning runs over from period to period with sufficient swiftness to keep the whole buoyant. The art of sentence-structure, like the gentleness and sentiment of that essay, escaped him as the years passed by; or perhaps he consciously avoided it: in "The Week" he complains of literary men who write in a succulent style, so that "their long, stringy, slimy sentences are of that consistency that they naturally flow and run together." At any rate, in "Walden" the sentences bear no more plastic relation to each other than do the stones of the cairn which now marks the site of Thoreau's hut.

Margaret Fuller complained that in Thoreau "truth is seen too much in detail"; and Horace Greeley remarked of his Canadian essay that "the cities are described to death"—a journalistic criticism of eighty years ago, when writing had less need of compression than it has to-day. Indeed, Thoreau did traffic in so much detail that in "The Week" he had no room for half the incidents, sights, and sounds, which that fortnight away from Concord yielded him. One might as logically condemn Meredith for the wealth of allusion in "An Essay on Comedy"; for Thoreau was no sophisticated, bored traveller, whirling round the world in the belly of the iron horse and seeing only one new thing a day. The world smiled fresh for him and was constantly surprising him with its novelty. With the natural phenomena within the bounds of Concord he was familiar. But outside the village gates lived barbarians. Six miles up the Sudbury from Concord he discovered strange, almost foreign, men, "Nine-Acre-Corner men" and "Wayland men"; and when he walked twenty miles toward Wachusett he found that the towns already had a certain Western look. No wonder that for him Quebec and Montreal bristled with detail which the jaded eye of the hardened traveller would have dismissed as commonplace. The wonder is that two years at Walden did not burst the covers of that volume, and that the sentences had in that compass sufficient room to unfold and form their columns. But in these days when magazine-articles and novels, to say nothing of newspaper-articles, are unceremoniously lopped off to fit the Procrustean beds of contemporary journals, shall we begrudge one man the space to go over his world with a microscope? Who knows how much the rest of us have missed?

Simple narration defied Thoreau as it has defied more supple pens. Recounting with far too conscientious detail a series of trifling events, he seems as far removed from the reader as his Hindu mysticism. Such an essay as "A Winter Walk" would be almost sophomoric, were it not for the strength of its verbs. But the makers of college textbooks have all paid tribute to his genius for description. Here his mastery of detail rises to its highest uses. For Thoreau maintained such faithful vigilance over every aspect of the out-of-doors in all seasons—the number of birds, flowers, and trees; the variety of subtle effects of haze, cloud, brilliant sunshine; the procession of autumnal tints; the illusion that comes from looking through water and ice; the characteristic smells of swamps and

beech woods—that his descriptive writing is as fragrant and pungent as a hemlock pillow. He does not obtrude between the fields and the printed page. The shadow of his own gaunt form, which cuts grotesque capers on the pages of his reflections, here falls behind the writing-desk. His pantheism glorifies the woods as the nature-writing of romanticism glorifies humanity. Who is so phlegmatic that he is insensitive to the description of Walden Pond in September? Who is so dull that the image of Cape Cod, once seen through Thoreau's eyes, can ever fade from his memory?

Many of those who, reading "Walden" for the first time, are amazed and indignant at its social blasphemy, fail to discover the comic spirit that lurked behind the "celestial homespun" of Thoreau's style. His essay on "Economy" would be very dull reading indeed were it not for its many comic figures of speech. The comedy of civilization, as well as the tragedy, was visible from the vernal turrets on the shores of Walden Pond. Indeed, sometimes the comedy and tragedy were mingled:

I see young men, my townsmen, whose misfortune it is to have inherited farms, houses, barns, cattle, and farming-tools; for these are more easily acquired than got rid of. . . . How many a poor immortal soul have I met wellnigh crushed and smothered under its load, creeping down the road of life, pushing before a barn seventy-five feet by forty, its Augean stables never cleansed, and one hundred acres of land, tillage, mowing, pasture, and wood-lot!

Thoreau always spoke in terms of the visible, the concrete, the familiar.

Hardly a man takes a half hour's nap after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, "What's the news?" as if the rest of mankind had stood his sentinels. Some give directions to be waked every half-hour, doubtless for no other purpose; and then, to pay for it, they tell what they have dreamed.

"The fact you tell is of no value," said Emerson, "but only the impression."

One is disposed to regard Thoreau's strange propensity for puns and plays on words as no more flattering to him than would be a secret love of mulled ale to a prohibitionist. So reserved and austere a writer had no business to deal with elephantine touch in such bastard humour. Describing the wide-tired wheels used over the sandy roads of Cape Cod he says: "The more tired the wheels, the less tired the horses!" Of some twenty new towns in Maine he says: ". . . not one of which, however, is on my General Atlas, published, alas! in 1824. . . . The earth must have been considerably lighter to the shoulders of General Atlas then!" "However, as for Sandwich, I can not speak particularly," he wrote in "Cape Cod." "Ours was but half a Sandwich at most, and that must have fallen on the buttered side some time." He even goes out of his plodding way to comment on the "trite" hull of the steamer "Amphitrite." The occasional buffoonery in "Cape Cod" better becomes him, as, for instance, his slapstick passage on the Sandwich stage:

This coach was an exceedingly narrow one, but as there was a slight spherical excess over two on a seat, the driver waited until nine passengers had got in, without taking the measure of any of them, and then shut the door after two or three ineffectual slams, as if the fault were all in the hinges or the latch, while we timed our inspirations and expirations so as to assist him.

What this sentence promises is no doubt greater than what it yields; but at least it serves to remove Thoreau from the company of sour nose-thumbers at society. The poet-naturalist could not trip lightly across the slack wire of scintillant jest; but he was not too pompous or self-conscious to try.

With sardonic humour, strange as it may seem, he had better fortune. Both the matter and the manner lay within his grasp: the matter because his life of introspection and impersonal analysis had taught him the absurdity of human vanity and human pretence; the manner, because he had nothing at stake. Contentious as his essay on "Economy" is, it is never belligerent. Thoreau stuck no feather in his cap because he had answered, to his own satisfaction, the perennial question of "how to live," and he was not beating his drum for converts. There was no bitterness in his stoic breast; and although he could sharpen his darts to a keen point, he did not poison the barb. "Think of fifteen argand lamps to read the newspaper by!" he exclaims slyly in his account of light-house-keeping on Cape Cod. "Government oil!—light enough, perchance, to read the Constitution by!"

Mystic, transcendentalist, writer of a many-volumed journal, Thoreau did not write for the mob. Clarity was not his supreme virtue. The mystic import of the passage in "Walden" concerning the loss of "a hound, a bay horse, and turtledove" has never been explained; he refused to explain it himself. Let it be so: only dull-witted fellows want their literature, like their bank-accounts, in simple figures. Naked sentences do not stir the imagination. Thoreau's mind, like that of a truant school-boy, was ever running from the actual to the imaginative. On the mountain summits, especially, he could not view the landscape without summoning in classic array the gods of Greek and Oriental lore. Concerning Wachusett he ventured: "Who knows but this hill may one day be a Helvellyn, or even a Parnassus, and the Muses haunt here, and other Homers frequent the neighbouring plain?" Seated alone on the summit of Katahdin among the clouds, he looked back over the centuries more vividly than his comrades on the slopes below him could look back over an uncomfortable night in the woods:

Occasionally, when the windy columns broke in to me, I caught sight of a dark, damp crag to the right or left; the mist driving ceaselessly between it and me. It reminded me of the creations of the old epic and dramatic poets, of Atlas, Vulcan, the Cyclops, and Prometheus. Such was Caucasus and the rock where Prometheus was bound. Æschylus had no doubt visited such scenery as this. It was vast, titanic, and such as man never inhabits.

Even his literary criticism, which he struggled ineffectually to keep impersonal, carried him far from mere books and authors. Thoreau was neither content nor able merely to set down dates and titles of books, describe the qualities of the authors, and lend weight to his review by pedantic citations. There was no pedantry in him, only philosophy; no scholarship, only learning. There was always Sheikh Sadi of Shiraz beckoning him across the Atlantic and Europe to the philosophical richness of the Orient. So, in considering the writings of Carlyle, that divinity of transcendentalism, Thoreau must needs dip his tin cup into the springs of his Hindu philosophy, and intoxicated by that draft mix his figures of speech with Oriental extravagance. What meaning has the following passage on Carlyle?

Many have tasted of this well with an odd suspicion, as if it were some Arethuse which had flowed under the sea from Germany, as if the materials of his books had lain in some garret there, in danger of being appropriated for waste-paper. Over what German ocean, from what Hercynian forest, he has been imported, piecemeal, into England, or whether he has now arrived, we are not informed. This article is not invoiced in Hamburg nor in London. Perhaps it was contraband. However, we suspect that this sort of goods can not be imported in this way. No matter how skilful the stevedore, all things being got into sailing trim, wait for Sunday, and aft wind, and

then weigh anchor, and run up the main-sheet—straightway what of transcendent and permanent value is there resists the aft wind, and will doggedly stay behind that Sunday—it does not travel Sundays; while biscuit and pork make headway, and sailors cry heave-yo! It must part company, if it open a seam. It is not quite safe to send out a venture in this kind, unless yourself go supercargo. Where a man goes, there he is; but the slightest virtue is immovable—it is real estate, not personal; who would keep it must consent to be bought and sold with it.

Thoreau's style did not spring full-armed from his own austere forehead. It was a glorious compound of the forty-four volumes of Hindu literature which Cholmondeley sent him from London; of Tasso, Ovid, Pindar, Euripides, Shattuck's "History of Concord," Hayward's "New England Gazetteer," Plutarch's "Lives," Smyth's "Algebra," Atkinson's "Epitome of the Art of Navigation"; of Locke, Whately, Emerson, and the other sober volumes in his library; all strained carefully through the Concord microcosm. At once rude and classical, provincial and universal, ingenuous and sophisticated, his own style draws Thoreau in sharper strokes and more economically, with less use of the rocker, than Sanborn's amorphous volume. Thoreau climbed no higher than the tree-line on Parnassus; but he had learned the names of the gods, knew by common report their individual attributes, and believed steadfastly in their divinity.

J. BROOKS ATKINSON.

THE CLASS-WAR.

IN the previous articles of the series of which this article is the last, I feel that I have made clear that the economic distress of civilized society is entirely artificial and therefore preventable, and that it arises from a faulty system of land-tenure which permits the exclusive possession by individuals of the gifts of nature without adequate payment for the privilege. For the existence of this bad system of land-tenure we are all responsible. Therefore it is a narrow-minded viewpoint which attributes the ills of society to the greed or selfishness of any class in the community, unless it can be shown that there is a class which profits from the present system at the expense of the community and has both the will and the power to prevent a change. That there is any such class may well be doubted. If the system remains unchanged, it is not because of the opposition of any class, selfishly interested in keeping things as they are; but rather because of the ignorance and apathy of the great majority of the people who suffer its evil consequences.

At least we may be certain that neither side in the so-called "class-war" of to-day gains anything from the continuance of the present economic system. This war is between the employers of labour and their employees; that is to say, between those who organize and direct the industry of the country and those who take part in it only as hired help. Both groups alike are wage-earners in the true sense, since both are utilizing their mental and manual abilities in the production of wealth; and both alike are necessarily interested in having production completely untrammelled. Both, therefore, are, or should be, absolutely opposed to the present economic system, which restricts the use of natural resources and obliges Governments to secure their revenues by means of penalties on production.

The two sides in the class-war of to-day are fighting over the division of the product of industry; and in the heat of the battle, they are losing sight of the fact that the amount of this product is greatly reduced because of the restrictions on the use of natural resources, and because of the discouraging interference

of government. Not only that, but a large and increasing portion of the product of industry goes to neither of the belligerents. It is absorbed in the form of ground-rent by those who hold the privilege of possessing land and who, as landowners, contribute nothing to production, but merely exact tribute from it.

If there be any excuse for a class-war at all, such a war should not be between the two producing classes, but should be fought rather with all the producers on one side, and on the other the landowners who take from the producers a part of their product without rendering any service in return. It would be a mistake, however, to attempt to classify the population into producers and landowners and to assume an enmity between them, because so many individuals who are producers are also landowners, either directly or through their interest in corporations, as stockholders or creditors. Even the labourer who lives in lodgings and has not a foot of land to call his own, but who has a deposit in a savings bank, may by virtue of that deposit be a landowner.

Furthermore, it can not be assumed that landowners as a class derive any benefit from the present system. It is true that they can and do absorb a part of ground-rent, for which they render no service; but this privilege of taking ground-rent, carrying with it the power to interfere with industry and to exact tribute from it, can not be obtained for nothing. The privilege has a market-value which is reflected in the price of land, as I indicated in the *Freeman* of 30 August, and that price generally offsets any advantage arising from the privilege. This is not always true, of course. In some cases the purchaser may be lucky enough to secure his privilege of land-ownership for much less than it is worth, or after purchase it may greatly increase in value; and because these things frequently happen, landowners are often led into keeping land which they do not use, from those who could make good use of it, in the hope of securing this rise in value. On the other hand, the purchaser of land often pays much more for his privilege than it is worth, or sees it decrease in value after purchase. It is true that the price of land on an average is steadily increasing throughout the country, thus forcing industry to pay more and more for its prime necessity, but there are comparatively few landowners who do not suffer more from the loss in general prosperity which this increase causes, than they profit from the increase itself.

Doubtless there are in this country certain big interests which are able to exploit the people through the monopolistic control of natural resources, and are reaching out for foreign concessions so that they may also exploit the peoples of other countries. But even these interests are not to be blamed for taking advantage of a system which encourages their attempts to forestall and monopolize opportunity, and deliberately penalizes legitimate business. In fact there is no scapegoat upon which the sin of our economic system can be laid. Nor will bitterness of feeling and abuse of others lead to reform. We are in an economic muddle which is to the disadvantage of all, just as the institution of slavery was to the disadvantage of all, even though the slave-owners were unable to see that it was so.

What is needed now is dispassionate thought and intelligent action. The belief in an unavoidable class-war makes both of these things impossible. How prevalent, however, is this idea of an irrepressible

conflict between employers and employees! Not only is it held by the socialists and communists, who expect the war to end in a victory for the proletariat and the establishment of the State as the sole employer of labour; but the idea seems also to be widely accepted by business men and by the leaders of organized labour. How pitifully little have the labour-unions accomplished towards the betterment of the economic position of labour! How little, indeed, can be expected from organizations which rely mainly on collective bargaining backed by the destructive strike, to raise or maintain wages, and whose policy has so often included advocacy of legislation destructive to industry! As long as the phenomenon of involuntary unemployment continues to exist, the competition of the unemployed for jobs will operate with irresistible force to keep wages at a low level; and since strikes can do nothing to reduce unemployment, their use in industrial disputes can only make matters worse.

Among business men, there are many who still look upon the employees as the natural enemies of business, with whom it is necessary to wage constant war in order to keep wages down, forgetting that by doing so they are destroying the market for their goods. There are many others with more enlightened views who consider their employees to be co-workers and expect to get beneficial results through various forms of welfare-supervision and through profit-sharing and other co-operative schemes; but they are bound to be disappointed as long as they continue to look with equanimity upon the monopoly of the indispensable requisites of industry and accept as inevitable the penalties put upon industry by government.

There is another phase of the question which needs some discussion. I have previously pointed out that the taxes collected from the people should be, and by municipalities often are, expended in such a way as to create land-values; but that these publicly created values are not taken for the benefit of the community. Examples of this sort of thing are to be met with every day. For instance, the following item appeared in the *Boston Herald* of 27 August:

Oxford, 26 August. The tax-rate for the year 1922 has been set at \$52.10 a thousand, more than double that of last year, \$22.50. The assessors explain the tremendous jump by pointing to a long stretch of cement road, recently laid, and by referring to the doubling of appropriations at the last town meeting.

One can not be certain from the above that the greatly increased appropriations of the town of Oxford were wholly due to the building of a cement road, but one may infer that a very substantial portion at least was for that purpose, and one may be sure that the road added to the value of much of the land. But the increased value does not go to the town. All that the town can get is the right to tax the increased value at the regular rate of taxation on property. The bulk of the increase goes to the owners of the land. Thus the taxes of the town are spent to enrich individuals, and the deficit must be made up by an increase in the penalties upon industry and home-owning.

In the same paper, of the same date, appeared the following item:

Real Estate in the vicinity of Wollaston, Savin Hill, and the Neponset water-front will increase greatly in value upon the completion of Neponset Bridge and the construction of the proposed Old Colony Boulevard. In anticipation of increased land-values along the boulevard upon its completion, many real estate investors are quietly buying up . . . As the result of improvements made along the Columbia road boulevard, South Boston, real estate in that section has almost doubled in value since 1917.

In other words, the taxpayers of Boston invest money in civic improvements, and private individuals take the greater part of the values thus created; and this sort of thing, we know, is going on all over the country. How foolish, then, is the idea of a class-war, when all classes alike continue to support a system so unsound.

In concluding, I will briefly summarize the situation. Our system of land-tenure permits the private possession of land without adequate payment for the privilege; that is, only a small portion of ground-rent is taken by the community. The right of the landowner to take the greater part of ground-rent gives rise to a premium on the title to all land having any rental value, which premium is the price of the land, or, in common parlance, its value. From this system the following evils are the direct result:

1. The activities of the people and the expenditure of public revenue create land-values which in greater part are taken by the landowners. Thus public funds are appropriated to private individuals.

2. The possibility of rise or fall in land-values makes the possession of land a speculation, and injects a gambling spirit into industry.

3. The failure of government to take sufficient ground-rent for the collective needs of society obliges government to penalize industry and enterprise with destructive taxes.

The possibility of increase in land-value, coupled with low taxes for holding land idle and high taxes on its use, leads to the withholding of valuable land from use, and thus restricts economic opportunity and produces the phenomenon of involuntary unemployment, which in turn is the underlying cause of bad business and low wages, poverty, disease and crime.

JOHN S. CODMAN.

PHANTOM.

(Translated by Bayard Quincy Morgan.)

My wife has furnished for me the tiny corner-room in the front, and I am now sitting in it. Across the way the village brook murmurs under ash and willow. Below me I hear the tinkling bell of the little shop which my wife tends. It does well and supplies our modest demands completely.

But I shall have to undertake something besides. First, I have time to spare, and then I have spiritual cravings. Otherwise I am quite content and feel as happy as a king.

I smoke a pipe. That costs me virtually nothing, for we have cheap tobacco in the shop. Smoking stimulates the fancy. It also quiets. I get by it, for example, the opportunity to feel a state of agreeable leisure and at the same time to set down my thoughts in writing. "Why don't you write," says my wife, "perhaps it may turn out to be a book, you know."

I just simply write down everything that passes through my mind; and if I should succeed in making a book, why shouldn't I be able to write a second, a third? Then I should be an author. In the most natural way I should then have found my desired avocation.

This house, which my father-in-law bought six months ago, together with the shop, did once belong to the widow of such a person. Her name was Mrs. Wander. Wander was a schoolmaster who had had to give up his position on account of certain views. After long wanderings he found this asylum, like me, and had a livelihood in it. His life-work, which he may have begun and completed in this very room, is a German dictionary of proverbs in five volumes.

II

I am unknown here so far. My wife and her father picked out this little village in the Hirschberg Valley, because they did not wish people to have constant occasion

to talk about my "aimless journeys"; but also for the sake of withdrawing me from an environment which at every step must waken recollections in me, and keep them awake.

Just here it occurs to me: am I not on the point of thwarting their intention?

Yes and no.

If I reflect here upon my destiny, seek to gain a comprehensive view of my past, and endeavour to set down veraciously all that seems memorable to me, it is for one thing an attempt to free myself from the spell of my recollections, and something very different from unwillingly falling under their spell once more, which would probably happen in Breslau.

I never wish to see that place again.

Perhaps a man would no longer be able to live after such experiences as mine, if all past events were not actually unreal. In no case does the past any longer affect us with the power of reality. I must proceed with great calmness, patience, and care, if I would still recall to my mind the details of my great experience. The last are of course the most vivid, whereas all those that precede my entrance into prison are much less clear, although much more important.

III

I spent six years, four months, and twenty-one days in prison. That is a hard fact, which I had rather put down at the outset. It would be more than disagreeable to me to have fraudulently won myself readers by concealing it, if a complete book should some day actually be born of the faded dream of my life. It will then remain a fact, and be it here expressly stated, that the writer has been a convict.

IV

I should quite certainly not be writing these lines, indeed quite certainly no longer be living, but for my present wife Marie, *née* Stark. Stark is a common name. But it is natural to say, as is the fact, that my present wife is not only called Stark [i. e. *strong*], but is so, although in pure externals she is characterized by a gentle and amiable nature. Her father was a bookbinder. If his daughter has been strong, she has also had in him and at all times a strong support. My father-in-law is eighty. He clerks in the shop below. He is an admirable man.

We have here in the village a strange schoolmaster: a baptized Jew, Dr. Levine. His father was a banker in Berlin, and very wealthy. They say that Dr. Levine renounced the greater part of his fortune in favour of his brothers and sisters. He was State's attorney, and was to be promoted to Attorney-General, when he suddenly resigned and, after suitable preparation, was appointed here as teacher in the grammar-school. Only thus could he appease his social conscience, as he puts it. As a favour, my father-in-law still occasionally binds a book for Dr. Levine.

I have sometimes told Dr. Levine this and that about my past. He encourages me to write it down.

He has furnished a comfortable study in the gable of the schoolhouse. When I recently returned to him some bound volumes, he detained me. I had to smoke a cigar and drink a cup of coffee with him. It was then I showed him the picture.

My wife knows nothing of the picture.

I received this picture from Melitta.

You see, when my relations with Melitta were at their zenith, I had told her in a confidential hour of my weakness for Veronica Harlan, the daughter of the hardware-merchant. Melitta was good-natured. One day she was having her picture taken and saw this picture in the photographer's studio. It was not hard to persuade him to let her have it, as she found the child-face in the picture so uncommonly beautiful. Dr. Levine also found it uncommonly beautiful.

It is beautiful, truly, but thank God it has no more power over me.

V

"No more power over me."

This assertion must be modified.

To-day with God's aid I enjoy perfect health. This health I attained in three years of utter solitude in my prison cell, and subsequently, when I was employed in the prison-library through the kindness of the chief-warden. There I could also complete my education.

Since I am now enjoying perfect health, the little picture has no more power over me. When the original of this picture entered into her power over me, I was twenty-eight years old, and, because I had been sickly from childhood, still older in spirit. From childhood I have been sickly, I said; I became really sick about in my twenty-second year. I coughed much, and for several years the cough always left blood on my handkerchief. This had, however, passed when my spiritual sickness began.

They say that the so-called "consumption," that is the lung-disease, intensifies the craving for love. But I can perhaps return to that later. Anyway, it is the affair of medical science to determine what influence the body has upon the soul.

So much I think I can say, that when the spark fell upon my soul, a vast pile of fuel had collected in both soul and body.

Now what sort of spark was it, and of what origin was that spark? Here I could choose between having it consist of divine or devilish fire, tracing its origin from heaven or hell. Strictly speaking, if I were still in a position to operate with these concepts, I should have no choice at all. For since this spark gave rise to a truly hellish conflagration, a Christian could never admit that it was a heavenly spark. And so, indeed, the prison chaplain, the Reverend Mr. Walkmiller, called it a hellish spark, and thereupon of course found it very easy to trace all the terrible consequences for me and others back to this incendiarism of Satan.

Such a simplification would not be in the interest of truth, which is my purpose.

Just now I have once more scanned attentively the picture of the thirteen-year-old daughter of the hardware-dealer, and I must say that it is of captivating charm. "Virgin, mother, queen!" the Master¹ would say. A sacred image in itself. It would not be strange if pilgrimages were made to it from far and near.

An orthodox Catholic might object that the guile of the devil may have occasionally made use even of the unsuspecting Virgin Mother, in order to lure souls to destruction. So when I say the picture has no more power over me, I mean that in the sense of its misuse by the devil it has no more power over me.

VI

So much for Satan; to trouble him again will, I hope, be unnecessary.

I was simply burned to ashes, as it were, by a conflagration, because I was absolutely defenceless, after my mole-like existence, before the inrush of the divine flame.

But in so far as this picture is the reflection of the divine flame, it still has power over me, and will retain it until my death.

I first saw Veronica Harlan one noon, when I, a poor municipal clerk, was walking home as usual. Before the city hall of Breslau stands the whipping-post. There are rings on it, with which the child was playing. It was the twenty-eighth of May, a date which for many reasons, as you will understand, I can not forget. Even when the passers-by began to notice her, the governess could not divert the interest of the child from the whipping-post. She tried repeatedly to lure away from the steps the strikingly beautiful creature with the flying, saffron-yellow hair. In vain. I only know that my hat flew from my head—some one had jostled me—and recall how the child burst into an irresistibly hearty laugh at it.

Without the experience of that moment, I should probably be to this day without reproach before the world,

¹ Translator's note: Title of a popular novel by Gerstäcker.

¹ Translator's note: Goethe, *Faust II*, 12102.

and sorrow upon sorrow would have been spared me. But there is a proverb, to be sure not a German one, in the collection of the excellent Wander: "Even my own sorrow is dearer to me than the happiness of another." And if I were asked whether I would rather not have had that morning's adventure, seemingly so harmless, yet so pregnant with consequences, I must needs reply:

I would rather yield up my life than that experience.

VII

This confession, to my former judges, would be equivalent to the expression of basest obduracy; to a man of average common sense, the expression of highest folly. If I live long enough and abide by my desire and present ability, until all has been said that can make a frank and full confession wholly frank and full, and if my judges shall one day read it, it may be that they will change their minds. They will perhaps recognize how distorted, how incomplete, how false my confession in the protocols really is. The man of average common sense, on the other hand, who has already declared me foolish, will in the end regard his opinion as confirmed. For my part, as I reflect on my task, reflect superficially to be sure, I can not help seeing in it the problem of weaving together the story of a dunce, a fool, and a criminal.

Of course, in doing this, I myself hope to be able to rise above the dunce, the fool, and the criminal—or let us say, to cast off all three.

VIII

A word about my extraction.

My father was a tax-collector, and had under him the supervision of the brandy-distilleries. In his duties he was frequently treated to liquor, and had eventually become a pronounced toper. As he was seldom at home, but travelled about on business and depended on hotels, the greater part of his income was squandered, in addition to his travel-allowance. Had he not had a stroke of apoplexy in the very nick of time, they would probably have driven him out of office, and mother would have lost her pension. She had already made up several deficits in the accounts, having to beg the necessary sums of Aunt Schwab, which was not easy.

My mother had a hard life.

Wholly disappointed by my father, almost wholly abandoned, and made wholly unhappy by him, she found solace in her children, as is common in such cases. She had two sons and a daughter. I was the oldest. As long as my brother and my sister, the youngest among us, were children, things went well enough. When they had passed their seventeenth or eighteenth year, it became absolutely clear that one could not rely on them any more. That was at the time when my mother was already in the fifth year of her widowhood.

I had always been on especially good terms with my mother. When this had begun, I do not know; I think, very early. It was already so when I first observed that my father could not endure me. As he was also mostly at odds with my mother, I naturally took sides with her.

I can not say when I became her avowed favourite. It must have been before father's death. Even then she would often call me her only comfort. Later, when I had become a solicitor's clerk and always put my whole pay into her hands on the first of the month, I would not infrequently hear her say that I was her only support.

The rent into which we moved after father's death was in the second story of an old-fashioned little house in Pocket Street. We kept it until the catastrophe came; that is, for about eight years. It was very small, very dark, but nevertheless not uncomfortable. Such quaint little city houses, with their small windows and low-ceiled rooms, usually have great charm. I had no idea but that I and my mother should live in those rooms till the end of our days.

I assumed in the little household the position of father, of head of the family. Considerably older than the other children, I was an authority to them for that reason alone. But more than this, my mother took every occa-

sion to affirm in their presence my paternal power over them. It fell to me for another reason too, because I had long been the sole breadwinner. When my brother and my sister occasionally earned something themselves, they never turned over so much as a red cent to my mother.

This paternal authority I never misused, to my knowledge.

To spare my lungs and larynx I had accustomed myself to speak in a low voice. It became second nature with me. It is still clear in my mind how at the trial several of the jurors cried to me, "Louder, louder!" This restrained manner of speech I never needed to accelerate or intensify in intercourse with my brother and sister, even when I had occasion to admonish or reprimand them. I may say that I enjoyed from them esteem mingled with admiration, and had a more unrestricted authority than even my father had ever possessed.

"You ought to teach, or rather, you ought to have become a teacher," my mother would say at times, when she noticed how I would take the trouble to hear my brother and sister recite dates in history, Bible verses, and the like. I am surely under no delusion in crediting myself with always having been to them a willing and patient adviser, helper, and teacher. I took real pleasure in teaching.

Once, when my mother had repeated her "You should have become a teacher," it occurred to me to wonder, I being then twenty-five, whether that were not still possible. The idea aroused my interest, nay my enthusiasm, in so far as one can call enthusiasm any one of the less depressed moods of which I was capable. Within a short time I had secured sufficient information, used for the first time a part of my wages to purchase books, and begun to spend every free hour in preparing myself to take the teacher's examination for secondary schools.

Until then I had lived along in a state of natural resignation, without thinking. While I was studying English, French, and the other subjects both winter and summer, in my cosy little room, the door of which opened on a wooden gallery above the little court, I was for the first time doing something which originated in a genuine initiative of my own. Hence I had a special gratification in it, and felt my self-confidence increasing.

I have not yet mentioned the double bone-fracture which I had had the misfortune to suffer as a child. My father had a military way of dealing with me which was hardly very appropriate in view of my gentle nature, with its tendency to subordination. When the name Lorenz, for so I was named, rang through the house in his accents, I almost always lost my head completely. Hurrying down a staircase in such a state of mind, I slipped and broke my leg. The bones were badly set by a quack, so that the affected leg became shorter. In order to repair the damage, the leg was once more forcibly broken by another quack, whereupon it ultimately became still shorter. After that I limped, and that affected my way of life not a little, more especially at that time. For obvious reasons I avoided the children's games, in which I had so far taken part with enthusiasm, and turned to quiet occupations, preferably indoors and always where there was nobody present.

I think it was not until my trial that I really learned to think and to realize the blessing of independent thinking. Yet a beginning had been made when I formed the resolve to work towards the teaching profession; and, as I have said, an indubitably increased self-confidence was the beneficial result of it.

IX

Indeed the self-instruction I had begun was beneficial to me in every respect, and I think back with pleasure on the hours I devoted to it. (My wife knows that, and has therefore tried to make this room as similar as possible to that in which I used to pursue my studies. The old tile-stove, against which I had shoved up my little study-table, was chocolate-brown. Perhaps on the advice of her father, she has had this very similar stove set up for me, and by it stands the little old table once more.)

Courses of instruction I procured by instalments. One by one I also purchased the other indispensable textbooks. My mother vacillated the while between anxiety and approval. Her father had been a prosperous citizen of Breslau, a furrier by trade, and the last four years before his death he had even been in the Council. Now, to be sure, she had resigned herself in every respect, but still it did flatter her self-esteem to see in me no longer the miserable clerk of a lawyer, but the future school-master. On the other hand, the diminution of the household money which she suffered in consequence of the book-buying, made itself painfully felt. Later, when my interest in literature and hence also for books developed beyond the range of teachers' courses, and I began to buy Reclam¹ editions and also somewhat more expensive editions of the classics, I sometimes found my mother in tears and had much difficulty in comforting and quieting her. To be sure I was never able to convince her that money spent for books not absolutely required for the examination was not thrown away.

Needless to say, through Schiller and Goethe my intellectual horizon was extended, the world of my ideas infinitely enriched. But my then incipient weakness for books, so much bewailed by my mother, had another advantage for me, which can not be overvalued: without it I should never have come to know my father-in-law and my present wife, and I think I have already stated that in that case I should no longer be living.

GERHART HAUPTMANN.

(To be continued.)

AN UNPLANNED EXCURSION.

THANKS to that Russian holiday of holidays, Easter, my departure from Russia was in itself in the nature of an entertaining adventure. The train left twenty-four hours behind its schedule. In fact, it was still holiday, and although my friends insisted that I remain until everything got back to normal I decided that as I had already prolonged my stay beyond its proper limits, I could not justify myself in tarrying longer.

To realize that there has at last come an end to the seemingly endless snow; to know that one will feel warm once more and that there will be flowers and birds; to see the earth put on her vernal clothes in Russia; all this gives to Easter an added significance. For to Russians, Easter is more than an ecclesiastical feast-day; it is the festival of earth's renaissance; therefore, however miserable people may feel, or however poor they may be, there is joy, apparently, everywhere. At Easter, every one gives up work for many days, not only as the custom was during the period when the Church held its fullest sway, but as it was before that, during pagan days. Amid the ringing of innumerable bells and feeling all about me the joyful spirit of Eastertide, I proceeded in a Government machine to the station.

On one side of the compartment to which I had been assigned were an upper and a lower berth, while the other side was occupied by a substantial upright piano—vintage of 1899—a grandfather piano. I had travelled on the Twentieth Century Limited in the United States, and on the *de luxe* trains of Europe, but this was the first time I had ever seen a piano in a sleeping-car. However, I realized that this was Russia, where anything might happen. My fellow-passengers in this coupé were a German agronomer, going to Berlin to purchase farming-supplies, and his companion, a Russian expert on farm-tractors. The Russian was a tall, large, typical Russian boy with a soft, almost effeminate manner. Although he had been in the army for several years, and had been on all of Russia's many fronts, he was as modest and retiring as a young girl, and even blushed painfully when I insisted that he share my food, since he himself had brought very little for the journey.

I wondered where we all were going to sleep, and waited

for bedtime with a good deal of curiosity. I meant to propose that we sleep in three shifts, but before the opportunity presented itself, the tall Russian hoisted his valise into the baggage-rack, climbed in after it and, using his hard luggage as a pillow, composed himself for sleep, with one booted leg hanging over the piano. There was little use in protesting. He was a soldier and used to travelling in Russia. We were guests. To all our expostulations he maintained a stubborn silence, and finally, to convince us that he had fallen asleep, began to snore loudly; while below him the piano, which was used for parcels, sausages and candles, stood like an irrelevant foot-note. I looked into the mystery of the piano that same night. The car, it seemed, had been used in the early days of the war—the amateur-war stage, when people still had time to think of such things—by some such organization as the Y.M.C.A., which helped to "keep the boys smiling."

It was a beautiful spring evening when we left Moscow, and the hurried parting from dear friends had left me somewhat restless. During the second night—I still slept poorly—I noted that our train was standing an unusually long time. After a while I rose and made inquiries. In a very matter of fact way I was informed that our car had broken down; we were sidetracked in a small wood and the engine with the rest of the train had gone on. When and how we were going to get out of the woods, no one knew or seemed to care; so, as every one else went back to bed, I rejoined my Russian and German bedfellows.

It was a bright, sunlit morning when we got up. After a "home-made" breakfast we decided to explore the neighbourhood. For this, we were assured we had the entire day and almost the whole night, as the train which would pick us up was not due until two o'clock the following morning. We proceeded along the railway-track until we reached a short turn. There, facing us, on top of a hill stood a good-sized church, overlooking a small valley. "*A bolshoia cerkev* (big church)!" I exclaimed, and remarked to the Russian that we must be near a *bolshoia gorod* (big city). He shook his head knowingly. A *cerkev* did not necessarily imply a *gorod*. We were likely to find it to be merely a little *selo* (village). We climbed up the wet incline, passed through a wood and came out into a small cemetery. Indeed there were graves in the wood, as well as in the cemetery. There was no fence to mark the bounds of this burying-ground, and many crosses stood among the old pine trees. Crude, unvarnished crosses they were, with unobtrusive, primitive lettering, giving the name, the date, and the simple statement that the sleeper was *grazdanin* (citizen) of the *djerevna* (settlement).

On the way to the village we met a countryman whom we questioned about the size of the town we were approaching. One hundred and fifty-five dwellings and twelve hundred souls, he said. The village presented a most uninviting picture. It stretched along the main highway which connects Moscow with Velike Liuki. The road was almost impassable because of the mud. In April, walking is extremely difficult anywhere in rural Russia.

When we arrived at the church we found there a small council of boys in session. They invited us to go up into the belfry and have a ring because Christ was risen. So we went up, and made the old bell boom forth through the valley, partly because the Jew of Nazareth had lived, but mainly because on the thatched roofs around us the snow was disappearing and in the cemetery in the wood there were soft, velvety pussy willows brushing their heads against the pine crosses; and because over our heads the larks were proclaiming to the world that their ancient kingdom remains uninvaded, no matter what economic decrees may be issued from the old Kremlin.

We did not realize that the boys had made us the object of a practical joke until a man below shouted to us to come down. He said we were disturbing the ses-

¹ Translator's note: Philipp Reclam began in 1867 the publication of his "Universal library," offering the best of the world's literature in tiny unbound volumes at about five cents each.

sion of the village soviet. On a little green a few houses away from the church, a number of benches were crowded with men and women. The boys had been told to stop ringing, but, since we were strangers in the village, they felt that the ringing could take place under our protection, for they supposed that their parents would not dare to find fault with strangers.

The church bells in Russia, it may be noted, have a different function from those of Western churches. During Easter any little boy or girl who is moved to rejoice, is free to ring the bells, and from morning to night one may hear the apparently aimless ringing of numerous bells. The belfries are approachable by entrances independent of the church-building itself, and many of the priests leave them open to any one who may wish to herald to the world that Christ is risen and to bid people to be joyful.

We came down, and explained that we had not realized we were disturbing the community-soviet. In the green where the council was in session, an old lady was gesticulating and protesting wildly. A member detached himself from the meeting and explained the difficulty to us. It was the ancient cry, as old as civilization: "More land." True, the Government had given them land, but there was not enough of it. The people had barely enough to keep body and soul together. There appeared to them no reason for this restrictive policy, for all about them were wooded tracts of land, unappropriated by anyone. These, the peasants argued, should be turned over to the soviet by the Government for clearing and tilling.

The argument seemed logical. I turned to my travelling-companions, the German agronomer and the Russian tractor-expert, for an explanation. The Russian said that it was a question of preserving the forests. I suggested that Russia had a superabundance of forests and that the preservation of one small woodland could not be of such importance, in view of the apparent poverty of these peasants. There was a twofold difficulty, he explained. Even if the Government were justified in apportioning the woodland or a part of it to this soviet rather than to another, and were able to overcome the objections of the neighbouring soviets, the system of land-tenure, apportionment, and cultivation had not yet been fully developed, and the men who were in charge of planning that work were few and had too much to do. But he did not believe that the Government would be justified. It was true that Russia had a great many forests, but it was a vast country and this was not an all-Russian but a local question. This particular guberniya had no abundance of woodland. In fact, all the forests it had should be jealously conserved for the sake of fertility and of future generations. Still, I argued, the Government should do something for these people. There were evidently too many mouths here for the allotted land to feed.

By this time many members had strolled over to our group and were listening. The Russian, addressing himself to the peasants rather than to me, said quietly: "You see, comrades, you must be patient. You are too many to live on these acres. Many of you are young fellows who, under the Tsar, would be in the army, and in an industrial country you would be working in factories in the city. The Government will build up the factories. When these are restored, you will make plows, nails, hammers and everything the farms need. Labour here will become easier and the land will be more productive. Trains will carry the produce to the cities and bring articles from the cities in return. But you must be patient. The Government is doing everything conceivable to speed the day. But Russia has many enemies. You must be patient."

The chairman now came over and complained that we were interfering with the business of the meeting, and asked those who had left it to return. He invited us to remain until the end or to come in and take part in the discussion; but we excused ourselves and walked across the way to the schoolhouse. Two pretty young

school-teachers, dressed in their holiday clothes, were sitting outside the school. One of them wore a bright red dress with small brass buttons, and white sleeves, and over this a many coloured Bokhara shawl. We asked permission to examine the school, and were cordially invited to tea. The schoolhouse consisted of two rooms and an anteroom where a stove stood among sacks of potatoes; and a stepladder led up to an attic under the thatched roof. The rooms were about the same size, some thirty feet square. One was the schoolroom, and the other served as living-quarters for the two teachers. In the schoolroom which was barely large enough for one grade, three classes were going on simultaneously, another teacher coming from a neighbouring village every morning. For years the school had had no paper and only a few pencils and pens.

In spite of their difficulties the teachers seemed happy. They were both from Moscow. Did they want to go back? They sighed. But what could they do? Their pay was so small and so irregular. Sometimes they received no pay for four months. How did they live? One lived somehow, in Russia. One of them had planted potatoes last year in a field which I could see from the window. They multiplied twenty-five times and the sacks in the anteroom were some of the yield. Then the comrades from the village brought things, and one lived. Life was not so bad after all, and they had just finished building their new theatre, which we certainly must see. From a bed which stood behind a screen, one of the girls brought out paper caps and crowns, the kind that children wear when they play Queen of the May. This was for their theatre, and the opening performance was to take place on that same evening.

To enter the theatre we passed through a stable, rounded a manure pile, and, after chasing a hen and her brood away from the stage-entrance, we entered, followed by most of the younger generation of the village. At one end of the room was a stage containing the proscenium and two cupboard "dressing-rooms." Facing it were seven long benches in raised order. For illumination there were three lanterns fitted with candles. In these Thespian quarters there was to be that evening a performance of something which sounded like "Krasnyi Snaptchik." I had to promise to come to see it; but unfortunately when night came, it was impossible to induce the other passengers to accompany me, and as the village was some distance away from the spot where our caravan was stationed I reluctantly decided to forgo the pleasure of seeing railway-employees hold the mirror up to nature in a converted stable, with properties consisting of cut-out paper hats and Queen-of-the-May crowns. To the two pretty managers I extend my apologies. I meant to tell them that I was something of a theatrical man myself, but realizing that I was in Russia, where every one—well, it would be carrying coals to Upper Silesia.

When we returned to our abandoned car, it was very quiet. Here and there a bird twittered. The sun had set, a pale moon appeared over the village, and above the coveted forest the evening stars smiled peacefully. In the village, undoubtedly, two nervous, flushed girls were giving final instructions for a performance which was to make them happy and famous as dramatic directors.

CHARLES RECHT.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS.

REPRESENTING THE NATIONAL BLUSTER.

SIRS: Your apt suggestion of Sir Arthur Sullivan's air as a national tune recalls the observation that the melody played most often at military reviews, drills and manoeuvres, the theme which, as rumour goes, so impressed illiterate foreigners that they doffed their hats when it was played, and stood at reverential attention, and which represents the national bluster not at all badly, may be found directly after the introduction of the overture to the "Pirates of Penzance." I am, etc.,

Brooklyn, New York.

THOMAS J. DAVIN.

ANOTHER VIEW OF SENIORITY.

SIRS: The editorial in your issue of 16 August, on the seniority-question in the railway-strike is an eloquent testimonial to the cleverness of the big pro-management press and the publicity of the railway-executives.

One of the chief advantages of membership in a union is that the individual labourers who strike do not, as you say, "drop out of line, as they do at a ticket-window, and if their place is restored, it is only as a concession," but that the entire aggregate of workmen ceases work as a unit, and when the strike is settled, returns as a unit. Within this unit, every individual returns to his accustomed place with whatever rights of seniority, or the like, pertained to, and pertain to, it.

This is the view of the matter which has entered into the law of a number of States. In Massachusetts, for instance, it is unlawful to advertise for workmen to take the place of strikers, without stating that a strike is in progress. This is done to give the new man notice, first, of the possibility of labour-trouble with ensuing violence; and, secondly, of the fact that his tenure of office is subject to a settlement of the strike returning the striker to his old position.

You have often spoken in severe criticism of labour-unions; but I have always understood you to mean that the management of the unions was short-sighted, in your estimation, and that it should do much more than it did, and should face the problems of the day from a broader angle. In much of this I have agreed with you. You can not possibly deny, or do you? that whatever improvements in labour-conditions the last generations have seen, have been achieved by collective action of workmen banded together in labour-unions.

The desirable end to strive for, therefore, is broader vision in the unions and not their destruction. Your editorial, by espousing the arguments of those who would destroy the unions, would appear innocuous if printed in the big and kept press; but coming from the pen of one of that company of men who have made the *Freeman* the paper of American free men, it can not pass unchallenged. I am, etc.,
West Brooksville, Maine. EDMUND VON MACH.

IN THE BITUMINOUS COAL-FIELDS.

SIRS: It has occurred to me that some historical information on the subject of the bituminous coal-industry might be of interest to you at this particular time.

Going back to the war of 1861-65, all mining at that time was pick-work (hand-labour). Before the war was over, the wages of miners went up to seven cents per bushel (seventy-six pounds). During the late war, the wage for pick-mining never reached half that amount. Why these differences should be I do not pretend to know.

Four years after the close of the Civil War, the wage for pick-mining had declined to four cents per bushel, where it remained for a number of years. At present, no scale for pick-work offers much more than the half of that figure.

It was some time after the Civil War that the "pluck me" (company) store came into general use. Before that the miner could make his purchases where he pleased. To-day he can do nothing of the kind. True, he is, theoretically, not compelled to buy in the "pluck me" store; but every man jack of the lot knows that if he does not deal with the "pluck me" store he will very shortly find himself out of a job. The reasons for this will appear later. The advertised wage for pick-mining to-day is six cents per bushel. This, however, is an emergency-wage made possible by the strike-situation. Inasmuch as coal is bringing from eight dollars to ten dollars per ton at the pit-mouth (in spite of all official bluffing), clearly the operators are not getting the worst of it. Moreover, anything that is black passes for coal at present.

The bituminous mines can be divided into two groups: union and non-union; with many individuals and corporations financially interested in both. This looks to me very much like playing both ends against the middle.

One large, non-union works, within forty miles of Pittsburgh, can on a push, turn out 10,000 tons a day. At present their output is about 4,000 tons a day, while their profits are about \$25,000 a day. Is it surprising that one of the principal owners says, "What in hell do we want to end the strike for?"

I am reliably informed that there are easily two and one-half miners for every job. Here one comes smack up against stone wall no. 1. Why is this crowding allowed to exist? The "pluck me" store is the answer. Why does not the union break up this practice of crowding? The check-off is the answer. Years ago, the "pluck me" store was legislated out of Pennsylvania. But, under the fine hand of Mark Hanna, and others, the check-off was traded for the "pluck me" store

and the "pluck me" store came sneaking back, discreetly disguised as "supply-company."

Within the last six months, an official report of a Government commission has appeared to the effect that there are at least thirty-five per cent more bituminous mines open for business than the market can possibly make use of. This brings us to stone wall no. 2.

This commission stated flatly that from any point of view, the bituminous industry was greatly overdone. Then came another official report, to the effect that in the year 1921, the bituminous miners averaged 124 working days, some running as high as 156 days, some as low as twenty-four days, while for others there was no work at all. The same report states that the average wage is \$720 per year.

Regardless of who wins in the present coal-strike, I quite fail to see how these fundamental defects are going to be dealt with, and as yet I have heard no party to the present dispute make any mention of them. I am, etc.,
H. A. G.

THE POET OF THE STACKS.

SIRS: The other afternoon I ran into the Public Library on Fifth Avenue in order to verify a quotation from Walt Whitman, and asked one of the librarians at the desk if the poet's works were on the shelves in the general reading-room. "Yes," was the reply, "that stuff is over there in the corner." I then inquired of the attendant who presided over the shelves "in the corner," if he had any of "the stuff" in question, and he answered: "Yes, a Whitman book." After some searching, he produced the American English edition of M. Leon Bazalgette's biography of Whitman, "*L'Homme et Son Œuvre*," which, by the way, the author rightly declares—I have the statement in his own words, in writing—is not a translation of his book, "but an expurgated and arranged version."

In short, while one may find on the public shelves of the reading-room and consult *ad libitum* the complete works of Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, etc., the volumes of Walt Whitman, "the greatest of American poets"—to quote what a half dozen leading German contemporary writers say of him in the manuscript containing the passage which I wished to verify—are carefully relegated to the safe obscurity of the stacks, and even the best biography of him by a foreigner can be read by our carefully guarded New York public only in a bowdlerized version that the author of the original will not sponsor. I am, etc.,
New York City. THEODORE STANTON.

UNDER SUSPICION.

SIRS: Apropos of the critical review of G. Stanley Hall's book on "Senescence," which appeared in the *Freeman* of 23 August, does it not seem to you that Mr. Hall has chosen a rather inopportune time for its publication? Never before was old age under such suspicion as now. We are living in an old man's world, and behold what they have made of it! Mr. Hall should have postponed his apologia until a time when it would fall upon ears not deafened by bombs and "big Berthas."

I am no advocate of lethal chambers or firing squads for those who are injudicious enough to prolong their lives beyond the too-liberal allowance of the palmist, but I would diminish by all humane means the power now reposing in superannuated hands to put a brake upon the wheels of progress.

Fifteen years ago I proposed disfranchisement after sixty on the ground that, if we were justified in setting a minimum age-limit on the exercise of the suffrage because prior to that age youngsters did not know enough to vote intelligently, we should establish a maximum age-limit because after that age, people in general knew too much that was not so to vote progressively. I have now nearly attained the age-limit which I then set, but I have not changed my mind. I concede that some few exceptional people resist ossification beyond sixty, but they will be content to be excluded, if they stop to think of the army of old fogies who will go into the discard with them. Think how the body politic would soar, if relieved of the dead-weight of senile senators, judges and executives whose venerable façades are their only pretensions to wisdom. How much less likely would wars become if the deciding power were in the hands of potential fighters only! If the balance of power were put in the hands of the producing, rather than the hoarding elements of society, might we not safely predict a juster economic order?

Think it over and see whether you would not do well to make "Disfranchisement after Sixty!" a leading plank in the *Freeman's* as yet nonexistent platform. I am, etc.,
New York City. MARTIN McMIX.

A POLITICAL PRAGMATIST.

SIRS: Your recent editorial, "Holding the Bag," which appeared in the *Freeman* of 16 August, was the subject of a discussion in which the following views were expressed:

While one must admit that there is no early prospect of getting back the ten billion dollars or thereabouts, which we loaned to the Allies in the last war, it seems to us that the United States would be foolish to give up its claim to the debt. If we did so, we would merely be laughed at by the crafty and pitiless politicians that are ruling European countries. We would appear to them in the self-elected rôle of easy marks: first, for letting them have a Niagara flood of dollars for the mere asking when they were financially at their last gasp; and secondly, for making them a present of the whole sum from mere sentimental motives, without any *quid pro quo*.

No European statesman worth his salt would ever seriously dream of doing this. He would demand some equivalent. If we can not get the cash or goods for the reasons mentioned in your editorial, it would be the part of good statesmanship to keep the obligation on ice for use at the proper time.

This country has political and commercial interests and ideals outside its own borders. For their practical attainment the political lever of an unpaid debt may yet prove very effective. At certain times it may be more effective than a large army or large navy. We believe that the overwhelming sentiment of the people is against cancellation of the Allied debt and that no political party would dare to put it on its platform. I am, etc.,

G. L.

BOOKS.

A NOTE ON DOSTOIEVSKY.

THE fascination of the problem of criticism lies in the fact that it can never be solved. We theorize in busy idleness about it, we discover what criticism is, its function, its proper way of approach, its method, even its temper; but nobody pays any attention; every critic uses his own method, and whether or not he has a complete theory to justify it is only academically interesting. Every critical method, the most obvious, the most subtle, the most bizarre, is justified if it is applied well. The criticism that's best administered is best. But when it is well administered it always raises the whole unanswerable question of criticism. It is the distinction of Mr. Janko Lavrin's book on Dostoevsky that it does this. His method, which he calls "psycho-criticism," is theoretically and still more, practically, a dangerous method of criticism. One can fall more disastrously in it than it is possible to fall on the standardized plains of classical appreciation; but when we see one chasm after another being leapt, as we do in Mr. Lavrin's book, we are more exhilarated than we could be by more usual literary spectacles. It is hard to imagine an American or an English critic taking the risks which Mr. Lavrin takes and carrying them off triumphantly. Before a figure like Dostoevsky our attitude is a guaranteed acceptance, followed by an indication of minor blemishes; but any piercing to the heart of the mystery is interdicted, or rather not even imagined. Now, this is precisely what Mr. Lavrin attempts to do, by a psychological analysis of all the documents, personal and imaginative, in which the spirit of Dostoevsky is embalmed.

How dangerous this may be one shudders to think. The danger of analysis in criticism is that one always reduces—and must always reduce—one's subject not to his terms but to one's own. One must, therefore, be in some sense on a level with one's subject. The psychological critic who is continually looking upward has failed at the beginning; he is only an inferior kind of astrologer, turning the stars into dryasdust. Mr. Lavrin does not for one moment do this; he moves among the problems of Dostoevsky as if they were,

in his own sphere, his own. This is not presumption (only Mr. Gosse would consider it to be so), for the problems of Dostoevsky are universal problems and belong, therefore, whether we know it or not, to us all. And with what daring clarity Mr. Lavrin writes of them! I say "daring," for there are few writers yet who would dare to be clear on such an enigmatical genius as Dostoevsky.

Mr. Lavrin defines Dostoevsky as "a transcendental or symbolic realist, who sees in actuality only a veil of the inner reality." He looks at actuality for flashes of the thing it conceals. He seeks for these, Mr. Lavrin says,

not in 'normal' everyday trivialities, but rather in digressions from them, more—in a deliberate exaggeration of these very digressions. That explains and justifies the 'pathology' of Dostoevsky's heroes. It is by straining the real and the normal to their utmost limits, to the point of abnormality, that he tries to fathom the essence and divine the riddles of the normal itself. His 'pathology' is not the end but the means. In the sick and the abnormal he often finds, not the opposite, but rather an amplifying of the normal.

What a relief it is to read that, after the pæans of those who accept—and canonize—Dostoevsky as a pathological novelist. Yet, incisive as Mr. Lavrin is here, he makes a mistake in saying that Dostoevsky sought for the abnormal. No, he found it infallibly; and he could have found nothing else. It is his clearness in realms where other writers, and these the greatest, are vague or "poetical," that makes his characters abnormal, that evokes abnormality as a sort of necessity. Every man, seen distinctly enough, is abnormal, for the normal is only a name for the undifferentiated, for a failure to see the inescapable nuance. For instance when Versilov exclaims: "I can with perfect convenience experience two opposite feelings at one and the same time, and not, of course, through my own will," we feel ourselves in the presence of something exceptional and even strange; but nevertheless it is not the capacity for feeling "two opposite feelings at one and the same time" that is exceptional, for that is the universal if often unconscious experience of mankind: no, what is exceptional is the clarity with which this is recognized by Dostoevsky's characters and expressed in Dostoevsky's art. Dostoevsky wrote of the unconscious as if it were conscious: that is in reality the reason why his characters seem "pathological," while they are only visualized more clearly than any other figures in imaginative literature.

This capacity to "experience two opposite feelings at one and the same time" is at the centre of Dostoevsky's art, religion and psychology; and his whole work is the demonstration of a sort of unconscious theology within us, a sort of religion working in the subconscious minds of men like an ineluctable process, and demanding an end, a solution, a poise, a harmony: Absolute Value or God. Now, it is the character of the unconscious that it can not rest satisfied with, can not even conceive, the relative; it demands with all its power the unconditioned, that and nothing less. Nothing is more astonishing to Western Europeans, nurtured on relative conceptions of morality, than Dostoevsky's refusal to admit that the Good may be useful as well as good, that there are, along with higher reasons, politic reasons for being virtuous; that, in fact, people must acknowledge morality or else everything precious in civilization will perish. Yet all this, impatient as it sometimes makes us, and especially in this age when it is overemphasized, is nothing less than the other side of the truth: this is the realm of the conscious, the practical, the possible, the incarnate.

¹ "Dostoevsky and His Creation: A Psycho-Critical Study." Janko Lavrin. London: Collins.

Yet this half of terrestrial life Mr. Lavrin, either out of reverence for Dostoevsky or out of agreement with him, seems to ignore. To him, as to Dostoevsky, either an Absolute Value exists, in which case we must obey it, or there is nothing whatever to obey, and "all things are allowable," as Ivan Karamazov believed and feared. There is not such a thing as human will; there are only self-will and the will of God. In a certain sense, of course, this is true, for even unbelievers believe it: the tremendous thing, difficult to explain, is that Dostoevsky, in pages more intellectual than imaginative, ignored the very things with which the intellect is concerned: the organization of societies into States, the usefulness and possibility of things generally. To him, even intellectually, the realm of practical reality in which the will of God and man's will are intermingled, or rather torturingly entangled, was worse than nonexistent. He and his characters abhor the State too much even to fight against it. They think and feel as if it did not exist. What is excusable—or rather without need of excuse—in other writers, is in Dostoevsky a fundamental defect. Emma Bovary was artistically justified in her silence about society, because she was a creature of desire and not of thought; but Dostoevsky's characters are tormented with universal questions, with problems in which the existence of concrete societies is at every turn implicated, and yet he passed society by! "Either an Absolute Value or an absolute void!" says Mr. Lavrin, and postulates in a sentence the central thought of Dostoevsky. But one feels that great as Dostoevsky was in every direction—as a poet, as a psychologist, as a thinker—he arrived too soon, and without passing through the complete human circle, at this ultimate question.

But one must recognize here the inescapable fate of race, for it is the characteristic of the Slav race that it passes by the intermediate manifestations of the spirit which to Western Europeans are so interesting and so human, and goes immediately to ultimate things. Mr. Lavrin quotes the story told by the Nihilist Verhovensky "in a jesting tone" of how, during a discussion on atheism, "one old grizzled stager of a captain sat mum, not saying a word. All at once he stands up in the middle of the room, and says aloud, as though speaking to himself: 'If there is no God, how can I be a captain then?' He took up his cap and went out, flinging up his hands." The combined naïveté and profundity of that, one can find in no literature but the Russian; that attitude, that conviction, is Slavonic; and the old captain's exclamation expresses the whole of Dostoevsky's attitude. One says only once more that Dostoevsky was a Slav when one says that, holding this attitude, he was never planted firmly upon it. It is not merely that he desired to believe in God and could not: no, he believed in God and at the same time disbelieved in him, and he wished to have both his belief and his unbelief. This is the difference between him and his great antitype in Europe, Pascal. These two men battled literally from opposite sides for the same goal. The transcendental torment of Pascal was that he believed, made himself believe, while still he could not know, that God existed. But Dostoevsky knew that God existed; yet he could not believe in him. "If any one could prove to me," he says in one of his letters, "that Christ is outside the truth, and if the truth really did exclude Christ, I should prefer to stay with Christ and not with the truth." The truth here is simply rational belief. A fundamental knowledge of God's existence exalts and tortures Dostoevsky's most atheistical figures, his murderers, har-

lots and idiots; but their sceptical intellect, or perhaps something still more enigmatical and still deeper, denies them a belief in what they know. This failure, this torment is their essential sin; compared with this all their other transgressions, theft, adultery, murder, are as nothing to them. They are not only sinners, but transcendental sinners; beside them there are in literature no other sinners. The sins they commit are intellectual and universal sins; they sin like saints, nay, like angels of light. But when they sin, their knowledge of God remains with them. In hell they are spiritual; in heaven they are bestial. And wherever they may be, in the brothel or in the madhouse; and whatever they may do, whether it is murder or some act of ultimate love, they feel within themselves always "the capacity to experience two opposite feelings at one and the same time." "A knowledge that they were depraved as well as noble," it is said of the Karamazovs, "was necessary to them."

Mr. Lavrin is incisive and true about those characters in Dostoevsky's novels in whom the force of rational disbelief becomes so strong that while holding still to an intuition of God they rebel against him.

The chief characteristic common to all these [he says] is the protest of the individual consciousness against the vile and vicious order of the Cosmos. They diverge, however, at the inner conception of this will. A 'mutineer' who realizes God behind the universe becomes a God-struggler; when he feels behind it only a dark Power, an unconscious senseless complex of blind forces, he becomes a cosmic Nihilist.

Of the former state he says finely that

it imposes two difficult conditions: a permanent inner tension and a complete belief in God. The strength of the God-struggler consists in his belief in God; his weakness and danger in his doubt of him. For, as soon as he becomes conscious that God does not exist, his rebellious will loses the object against which it needs to strive. Against 'unconscious blind forces' he can not fight, for the simple reason that they are unconscious, that is to say, irresponsible, and, therefore, not guilty. Consequently his former struggle against God becomes a wrestle with the void—with that aimless, cosmic void which negates any real assertion of life and individuality. Hence, a God-struggler is and must of necessity be religious. His passionate repudiation of God is of a religious character, and it has nothing in common with those 'scientific' atheists whose consciousness never rises to the terrible problem of God.

I quote this passage because it shows what I mean when I say that Mr. Lavrin moves among the problems of Dostoevsky as if they were his own. So sure is he here that sometimes he speaks—it is no excess of praise or of criticism—almost like one of Dostoevsky's characters. But although he has submerged himself in the terrific world of Dostoevsky, and moves there with Slavonic pliability, he has pulled himself out again, and, standing on dry land, with Europe at his back, has passed a judgment. It is his performance of these two things which makes his book so pregnant. We lose something tremendous if at some time or other we do not lose ourselves in Dostoevsky; for he is one of those writers by whom we can not but find ourselves again, and find ourselves enriched and fortified. This Mr. Lavrin realizes; yet he is not altogether carried away, perhaps not quite enough carried away. "Neither Dostoevsky nor any of his really important heroes," he says, "attained a complete and final synthesis. Most of them remained on the plane of inner differentiation." And, in the last few pages: "The fact should be once more pointed out that in his social, as well as religious, *credo* there was more of will to believe than of belief itself." This is true, this should perhaps be said; but I think Mr. Lavrin insists upon it too much. Who has ever attained "a complete and final synthesis?" In what hu-

man figure has belief not been more a will to believe than anything else? All that one can say of Dostoevsky, or of the greatest man, is that he strove, that his struggle was great, that in it he realized himself, and that the cause, the centre and the meaning of his struggle was that intuition, that fleeting but unshakable realization of truth, which is the most inviolable mark of human greatness. This is human life *sub specie æternitatis*; this is tragedy, religion, art; and in his realization of this, if not perfectly in his expression of it, Dostoevsky is in the rank in which we set Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe.

EDWIN MUIR.

WORLDLINESS AND WORLDLINESS.

On the jacket of Mr. Van Vechten's novel¹ his publishers make the claim that it belongs to the "literature of escape." As the reading-public is further warned, or suggestively advised, that it contains "many saucy anecdotes," the expectation seems reasonable that it will be found to be rather of the *sous-genre* of Casanova than of Baron von Trenck.

Neither statement is of much help to an appraisal. A first quest through its pages yields nothing much saucier than a thinly veiled allusion to the domestic affairs of a famous dancer that were common gossip ten years ago, and a general attitude towards moral lapses modelled on that of young Mr. George Moore. Nor, though escapades are not wanting, is it quite clear at the end whither or from whom or what Peter Whiffle was trying to escape. Certainly he never escapes far or for long from Mr. Van Vechten. There are pages where the search for Peter, rendered still more difficult by the author's innovation in eschewing inverted commas, becomes baffling, and others where it is impossible, so utterly are Peter's efforts to achieve the three proportions of a personality interdicted, smothered and obliterated under the barrage of worldly erudition thrown out by his creator. There are even pages where the reader, abandoning the vain task, concludes that it does not matter, and that Peter's elusive trick of merging his idiosyncracies at any given moment into those of his biographer, is of the essence of the romance.

What does matter, however, is that Mr. Van Vechten, in doing a little more than justice to himself, has done a little less than justice to his creation. Whether biography be authentic or satiric, whether scalpel or thurifer be its chosen instrument, is not important. The essence of good manners still calls for a retrenchment of personality in the biographer, an abandonment of the high lights to the biographed. A certain grey anonymity is of the essence of sincere narrative in the biographic vein. Had Mr. Van Vechten been content to abandon to Peter the first fine rapture of the discovery of Paris, something of real value, something to compare with the unforgettable approach of Flaubert's Frederic Moreau, might have resulted from the contact of the lonely, unlettered lad from Toledo, Ohio (and all this seems to imply) with the sophistications of the tired and complex old city.

But the approach of Mr. Van Vechten, erudite and very *débrouillard*, fresh from the sophistications of Chicago, is quite another matter. Uncorrupted Toledan Peter, we suspect, would have stumbled over the lady's furniture, made mistakes about her pictures and bibelots, kissed her hand with clumsy gallantry, and been laughed at in her sleeve as a *blanc-bec*. But he would never, never have taken peeps into her bedroom before the bed was made up or the toilet table put to rights, tumbled the casket where she keeps her compromising letters, or learned the argot of her kitchen.

"I bought" (it is Mr. Van Vechten who is speaking) "old copies of 'L'Assiette au Beurre' on the quais. . . . I strolled through the Musée de Cluny, where I bought post cards of chastity-belts and instruments of torture. . . .

¹"Peter Whiffle: His Life and Works." Carl Van Vechten. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

I took in the naughty revues at Parisiana, Ba Ta Clan and the Folies Bergères. . . . I discovered a miniature shop in the Rue Furstemberg where elegant reprints of bawdy eighteenth-century French romances might be procured. . . . On days when I felt rich I dined with the *cocottes* at the Café de Paris. . . . I learned the meaning of *flic*, *gigolette*, *maquereau*, *tappette* and *rigolo*."

Cataloguing was Peter's besetting vice, but even here Mr. Van Vechten beats him easily. His biography is largely a thumb-nail gallery of *arrivistes* and camp-followers, some famous, others whom not to know perhaps is to argue oneself unknown, though here and there is one for whose ineffectiveness and dilettantism memory vouches. 'Nearly all have one character in common, an utter irrelevancy to the life of art or letters, on whose edge they have chosen to set up their ornate tents, and whose austere deserts they litter with the debris of their elaborate picnics. Whether "the top floor of an old mansion in Washington Square" house their æsthetic loot for a space, or whether from villas on Settignano or Piesole they descend on the city of the Red Lily to turn its crooked streets into a glorified *marché aux puces*, provincialism obtrudes like a Congress gaiter under a Medicean gown. The stage-setting may indeed have all the perfection that money can buy; high spirits, complete emancipation, the desire to *épater* may all be there. Bill Haywood will eat and spout. "Yorska, a wraith of black satin and black tulle, her pale Pierrot face slit with crimson and punctuated with two black holes" will stand against a curtain and murmur of vows and perfumes and kisses infinite, dreamed of by Baudelaire in his garret eighty years ago. But thrown upon their unaided resources, the soulful talk dries up, the epigrams refuse to come. What we get instead is this: "Did you ever try eating chocolate ice cream and smoking a cigarette simultaneously? . . . If you haven't, allow me to recommend the combination. The flavour of both cigarette and ice cream is immensely improved." The ghost of Oscar Wilde gibbers mockingly.

Permit me to suggest merely one addition to the little glossary of recondite Gallicisms collected by Mr. Van Vechten in Paris. What's the matter with *cabotin*?

Compared to the worldliness of Colonel Charles à Court Repington, the worldliness of Mr. Van Vechten is as the artfully applied patine on an Italian Cinquecento reproduction, to the rich polish induced by six generations of feudal elbow-grease on a Queen Anne tallboy. The Colonel is expensive in grain, like a Wing tie or a Colin Lunn pipe or a Hispano-Suiza car. A disillusioned American lady once told the writer that there was no such thing in England as good manners; only the right and the wrong kind of bad manners. Colonel Repington's manners must be of the right kind. Otherwise he would hardly possess the open sesame that is undeniably his, into circles where a mere desire to enlighten the world is no passport whatever. As a special correspondent with a roving commission, he is an abounding, perhaps even a bounding, success. He can take his international politics with the proper Ritz touch, renew an old war-time friendship with Mrs. Leeds (become Princess Christopher) who "only wants a peaceful life and to enjoy herself with her friends in England," keep a straight face when bluff Petain suggests that "we should send the whole German population over the Rhine and replace it by the French *mutiles de guerre*," and talk Eton, "where all of us had been," with the American ambassador at Bukarest.

One might take the Colonel more seriously were his judgments less evidently the result of moods only too apt to be conditioned by such things as dietetics or the discomforts of wayfaring in de-Baedeker Europe. He can appraise, in a moment of discouragement, the significance of finding "the old pre-war crowd" in Paris, half-dressed and with "Maurice Rothschild and Lady X skipping about like two-year-olds," and a little later, in Prague, wonder how "any country can afford to dispense with its governing classes and the traditions, taste

and tact of centuries of accumulated experience." In America he can rejoice at the establishment of a firmer accord with a nation whose chief civic achievement has just presented itself to him as the "highest, lowest, cruellest, cunningest and noisiest of all great cities." His pet nostrum for war-sick Europe is the maintenance of the Sèvres treaty, which at the present writing is not only dead, but is a corpse in that advanced stage classified by the sanitary departments of cities as a "nuisance."

All this is not to deny that Colonel Repington is a shrewd and pleasant travelling-companion and that his latest book¹ is excellent entertainment. But, even making allowances for inevitable haste in composition, "After the War" falls far behind "The First World War," in value as an historical document. One learns, it is true, that the jealousies which made the war are busy unmaking the peace, that the surgeons who bungled the operation are still checking the patient's circulation by sutures and tourniquets, while they squabble over the post-operative treatment and pay no heed to the perils of necrosis. But this was already no secret.

HENRY LONGAN STUART.

A REVISED HISTORY.

For several years after its original publication in 1907, Professor Schevill's "Political History of Modern Europe" was widely used as a text in elementary collegiate courses in history. It was displaced after 1914, because of the publication of a group of books which brought European history down to the outbreak of the great war, and provided student and general reader with an introduction to contemporary problems. This new edition which continues the narrative to 1921 is a reprint of the original work, with the following exceptions: for a former chapter entitled "On the Threshold of a New Century," Professor Schevill has substituted a chapter on the "Character of European Civilization at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century," and there are two additional chapters entitled "European Diplomatic Relations from 1871 to 1914 and the Outbreak of the Great War" and "The War and the Peace."

In these three additional chapters Professor Schevill's work marks a departure from the traditional political history of the balance of the work, and displays greater vivacity and imagination. The author interprets the chief political phenomena of our age, democracy and nationalism, as the natural concomitants of an era dominated by the advance of experimental science and a civilization founded upon the extension of machine-production. The war, furthermore, is to be understood in the light of these developments. Industrialized Europe set out to conquer the world; capitalistic imperialism raised the spectre of war. "Was this then to be the outcome of the movement of science and industry which had brought so many material advantages, and which had been acclaimed as the greatest triumph of the human spirit?"

After explaining the diplomatic background of the war, and showing how imperialism was the cause, and Russian mobilization the occasion, of the outbreak of hostilities, Professor Schevill offers a masterly summary of the consequences:

It was thus clear that the European war began over clashing Austro-German and Russian imperialist designs in the Near East, and particularly over the Austro-German resolve to remove the stubborn resistance of little Serbia from the otherwise unimpeded road to Asia. But war once begun, it was sure, owing to the treaty-obligations, as well as to the interests of the various Powers, rapidly to extend its circle. On France, for instance, the effect of the Russian-German breach was instantaneous, for France was so closely bound to Russia that she could not do otherwise than interpret the Russian general mobilization as the signal for the expected general war. The case of Great Britain was not quite so simple. Towards Russia the British Government had only informal obligations, while, though bound in a formal, specific way towards France, it had kept the agreement secret and was nervously uncertain

whether the Parliament and public would permit it to live up to its self-assumed obligation. From this embarrassing situation, which, to the alarm of Russia and France, kept Great Britain hanging fire, the British Cabinet was extricated by an ill-considered and indefensible act of Germany, the violation of the neutrality of Belgium. . . . Thus the Balkan issue, with which the war began, was found to be so intimately tied up with every other issue of European imperialism . . . became in the course of a few days a conflagration which spread until the whole of Europe, the dependent areas of Africa and Asia, and all the highways of the sea were lighted with the fierce glare of war.

In his treatment of the war Professor Schevill indulges in no heroics. He says frankly that he has made no attempt to direct attention to the "outstanding personalities of the various nations, the conspicuous and fast-shifting leaders in the field and council-chamber." This may account for the fact that Pershing and Joffre are not mentioned. President Wilson's peace-programme, however, receives more than adequate treatment, and, on the military side, the decisive influence of sea-power is emphasized. The analysis of the settlement after the war is complete and concise. The reader is warned that the world contains a number of "arenas of disturbance" which are survivals of the war—revolutionary Russia, the unstable but belligerent national States, nationalist Turkey, dissatisfied China, exploited Persia, Republican Ireland, dissentient India, a Moslem world in flame. As to *post-bellum* problems, Professor Schevill believes one must choose between the opinion of the optimist and the opinion of the pessimist; he keeps his own opinion under cover.

One regrets that Professor Schevill did not revise the bibliographical notes in the earlier sections of his book. His chapters on the nineteenth century certainly should have contained references to three admirable texts: those of Professors Hayes, Hazen, and Schapiro. In other respects, however, the fact that the earlier chapters required no revision after fourteen years, is a tribute to the author's sound scholarship.

EDWARD M. EARLE.

A WORLD RIGHT WYLDE.

So confined are the churchyards of many English villages that the gravediggers of to-day have often perforce to bury the dead in ground already tenanted. I have on more than one occasion been present when a sexton's spade has thrown up the fragmentary bones of Englishmen who have remained undisturbed for perhaps five hundred years. As one fingers these browned and mouldy chips of mortality, tossed out so carelessly upon the summer sheen of fresh green grass, one's mind is possessed by an insistent curiosity to know how the world wagged for these people who for so many centuries have been denied the blessed light of the sun. Such curious speculations will receive ample satisfaction from a careful perusal of the Paston letters.¹

It was a tradition with members of this ambitious Norfolk family to preserve their correspondence, a tradition which doubtless had its origin in a desire to retain all possible sources of evidence which might assist them in the interminable litigation in which they were so constantly engaged. It is possible to piece together from these letters a vivid picture of mediæval life. We can see the ancient manor-house of the Pastons, the horn-glazed windows which had only lately been filled with glass, with its truckle-stools, bare benches, trestle tables and stone-flagged floors spread over with rushes. Even in the sixteenth century we have evidence that this last custom was still in vogue; for Erasmus, writing to Wolsey's physician, says that the rushes in houses "were only occasionally removed and then so imperfectly that a bottom layer is left sometimes for twenty years, harbouring . . . abominations not fit to be mentioned."

The women folk of the establishment were completely subjected to masculine sway. We may recall in this connexion the Wife of Bath's account of her relations with her last husband:

¹ "After the War." Lt.-Col. Charles à Court Repington. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. \$5.00.

² "A Political History of Modern Europe, from the Reformation to the Present Day." Ferdinand Schevill. New Edition. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$5.00.

³ "The Pastons and Their England." H. S. Bennett. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$5.00.

He up-starts as dooth a wood leon,
And with his fust he smoot me on the heed;
And in the floor I lay as I were dead.

Apparently in those times, unless women fulfilled the duties expected of them by their exacting lemans they were as like as not to receive just such treatment. It was their business to keep the pantry and buttery well stored with provisions, and in those days this required no little foresight: they also had of necessity to spend much of their time in weaving and spinning so that at need the wear and tear of the household's apparel could be replaced.

The daughters of the house were considered of value only in so far as they might make fortunate alliances by marriage, the most violent action being taken against them if they showed the least sign of independence in these delicate matters. For example, when Elizabeth Paston displayed a disinclination to be married to Scrope, who was fifty years old and had suffered from a sickness by which, he said, "I am disfigured in my person and shall be whilst I live," the grim old dowager Agnes had her own methods for reducing the young girl's spirit. "She was never in so great sorrow as she is nowadays," she writes, "She has since Easter for the most part been beaten once a week or twice, sometimes twice in one day, and her head broken in two or three places."

There is indeed something pathetic about the gentle dutiful letters that these long-suffering women would write to their formidable spouses. "Right worshipful husband," they would begin, and then end with the simple wish that they might be "your true lover and bedewoman during my life." These letters for the most part are dated according to their proximity to some feast day, "written on the Thursday next before Crouchmas Day" or "written the first Tuesday after Pulver Wednesday." Apparently few persons outside of the monasteries knew the exact year by Christian chronology. Even Sir John Fastolf makes his reckoning in terms of the King's reign, thus: "Written at London 27th day of May in the twenty-eighth year of King Henry VI."

Writing letters at all was no easy matter in those days, and we come upon many quaint protests against it. One lady writes "No more unto you at this time," and ends the epistle with the words "written at Stonor, when I would fain have slept, the morrow of the Ladyday in the morning." Young John Paston writes to the mother of his lady "All the circumstances of the matter, which I trust to tell you at your coming to Norwich, could not be written in three leaves of paper, and you know my lewd head well enough, I may not write long."

Even when the labour of transcription was over, there was still the difficulty of finding a reliable carrier. The atrocious state of the roads, especially in winter time, rendered travelling no very popular employment. A great many of the highways "be holed and founded, to the great unease of all the Kinges Subjetts." Complaints of the lawlessness of the land are also frequent. "Be myn feythe here is a coysy werd (unsettled world)," exclaims Friar Brackly. "The world is right wylde," writes another. "I am put in fear daily for my abiding here, there are so many thieves stirring these days," complains Dame Margaret.

Of course no just conception of mediæval life can be reached without remembering the vast power and influence of the Roman Church. "To most people," says Mr. Bennett, "the ecclesiastical system was an accepted part of the scheme of things." Except for the occasional hostels or baiting-houses, with their ever-changing streams of motley travellers, the Church was in every village the only centre which offered colour and drama and poetry to life. We can well conceive the crude imaginative thrill of the East Anglian peasants, as they watched the slow procession of priests and torchbearers pass their hovels, carrying the corpse of John Paston from London to Norwich. Marriages took place at the church door and it is pleasing to note that the same

words are still in use in the Anglican liturgy. "I take N, in forme of holy chyrche, to my wedded wyf, fordsakyng alle other, holdyng me hollich to the, in sekeness and in hele, in ryches and in poverti, in well and wo, tyl deth us departe, and thus I plyght ye my trowthe."

Life in those days must have seemed to most people a simple enough matter as they listened each Sunday to the chanting of the mass for the souls of the dead. It sufficed to drink one's wine and home-brewed beer, to eat one's salted beef and Michaelmas geese, and then when the appointed hour came, to be buried in holy ground, lord and loon together, in sure and certain hope of the blessed resurrection.

LEWELYN POWYS.

SHORTER NOTICES.

THE appearance of a revised and enlarged edition of Mr. Vachel Lindsay's "The Art of the Moving Picture"¹ may be taken to indicate a still lively interest in the "industry," as it is called, among persons whose vision extends beyond the disclosures in the front pages of the newspapers. No one will deny that some of the poet's prophecies are quixotic, but enough remains to suggest that moving pictures may have some sort of artistic development in the future, which is more than has been suggested by the blurbs of their producers. In the present volume, which contains an introduction by the director of the Denver Art Association, Mr. Lindsay expands his theories concerning the function of moving pictures and their relation to the development of architecture, pageantry, and city-planning, and ultimately deduces something like a philosophy of art, occasionally touched with pure rhapsody. The volume might well be made a part of the "required reading" for Mr. Will Hays.

L. B.

In his "Eight Comedies for Little Theatres,"² Mr. Percival Wilde is neither observing life nor making observations upon it; he is scarcely concerned with life at all. He seems to have striven only to be clever, amusing, ingenious, various, unconventional. Surprise is the emotion to which he most frequently appeals. He deals in unusual situations, ideas that are "different," whether worth anything or not, tricks of the stage. For example, in one comedy, "The Previous Engagement," the author allows himself only one character, not because the situation demands it, but as a stunt, and sets himself the task of exhibiting as many devices as he can discover to avoid soliloquy. In another he employs a device used by magicians in their disappearing-acts, apparently for the sole reason that it is a novelty in a comedy. Each play is of a different type or tone from the others, and the resultant impression is as of eight tricks performed with more or less ingenuity. They have about as much to do with the drama as does the contortionist of the vaudeville-stage. Indeed they are really exercises in technique, studies in dexterity, rather than plays.

R. A. P.

CIVILIZATION, according to Mr. Stoddard,³ is facing two great perils: bolshevism and tainted germ-plasm. Adopting a rigid conception of heredity as the determining factor in character, and swallowing whole the theory of a superior Nordic race, he paints a gloomy picture of American intelligence becoming submerged by the constant propagation of the unfit and by the infiltration of undesirable, non-Nordic immigrants. Mr. Stoddard's theory is calculated to make a favourable impression upon all who can persuade themselves that they possess indisputably Nordic antecedents. Unfortunately it does not seem to stand up before any test of fact. If the large immigration from southern and eastern Europe had really introduced inferior strains into American life, one would expect to find a notable process of cultural and political deterioration directly traceable to this cause, and setting in about 1880. It is clear that no such thing has taken place. As to Bolshevism, it is always easy to raise a scare; and Mr. Stoddard is quite as successful as most of his competitors in this enterprise. But his description of the Russian revolution is rather a matter of fancy than of fact. He goes sadly astray when he remarks that Russian Bolshevism is a new phase of the revolt against the westernizing tendencies of Peter the Great. As a matter of fact the Bolshevik leaders, most of whom are returned exiles, are Westerners *par excellence*, who believe that the success of their political theory depends upon the speedy transformation of Russia into a great

¹"The Art of the Moving Picture." Vachel Lindsay. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.00.

²"Eight Comedies for Little Theatres." Percival Wilde. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company. \$1.50.

³"The Revolt Against Civilization." Lothrop Stoddard. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$3.00.

industrial country; and all their economic policies are directed as much as possible towards this end. No one who has read any of Dostoevsky's novels could very well imitate Mr. Stoddard's mistake of characterizing this mystical Slavophile as a nihilist. The author apparently regards "Social Revolutionists" as a synonym for Bolshevik, despite the fact that the Russian Social Revolutionists have always offered the most vigorous opposition to the Marxian Socialists. Most inaccurate of all is his naive observation that "Bolshevism and syndicalism are basically one and the same thing." Between the Bolshevik, with his system of rigid State control of industrial undertakings, and the syndicalist, with his ideal of each industry running along its own independent lines, there is about as wide a gulf as one can expect to find between social theorists. These numerous and striking errors of fact lend a touch of absurdity to the tone of solemn dogmatism which the author employs throughout his work.

A. C. F.

THE collection of short stories garnered under the title of "The Red Mark" and published a dozen years ago, seems to have anticipated the vogue of South Sea fiction in too great a degree, and it has recently reappeared under the more inviting title, "Where the Pavement Ends."¹ The success of such work as this should not be dependent upon readers' fads, for John Russell is a writer of romance of substantial achievement. The stories in this collection are richly, vividly conceived, and drawn with an economy and strength which place them well above the ruck of short fiction. A sure sense of the dramatic, and a skill in throwing the main elements of the narrative into bold relief, are among the most characteristic of Mr. Russell's abilities.

L. B.

MR. BERESFORD must have smiled as he selected the patched and threadbare theme which serves as the motive force for "The Prisoners of Hartling,"² and yet in its very familiarity there is something which makes his somewhat unusual treatment of it decidedly interesting. Here is a family joined defensively and offensively against a foxy old codger who exercises a profitable spiritual domination by playing upon the fears and frail hopes of his relatives. How he plays the game of hoaxing his little group of serious parasites, has been worked up into a tale of real dexterity and shrewd character-drawing. Although it is not an important addition to the Beresford shelf, perhaps, it is, nevertheless, a competent novel which gets sharply under the surface of people and lets the consequences develop without any high-handed interference from the author.

L. B.

MISS ANNE DOUGLAS SEDGWICK is certainly a capable if not an important novelist. If the characters in "Adrienne Toner"³ give one the impression of being synthetic rather than real human beings, people built up out of a set of carefully weighed, consistent, qualities, the doing of them has obviously given such interest to the writer that the reader is interested a good deal of the time. Adrienne Toner will not do anything to displace Daisy Miller as the type of the American abroad, out of date as Daisy may now be; yet to some people, Adrienne will seem an authentic American type, for she is made up of a collection of qualities that pass as being typically American. Miss Sedgwick is said to be herself an American, but that has been no help to her in creating Adrienne Toner. She can not create, but she can assemble the parts of a character very cleverly. It is, perhaps beside the point to say that Americans are not as smug as Adrienne, or as absurd, or as eccentric; and, more particularly, they are not as frank. Frankness is not a characteristically American quality, and it is not the opposite of subtlety; very often it is a concomitant of subtlety. The author would appear to have garnered the qualities with which she builds up Adrienne from a selection of those advertisements sent out from various parts of California, which tell you how to gain the mastery of your own and other peoples' minds, how to penetrate the mystery of the universe, how to combat evil and uplift the world, and so forth. Adrienne talks like the editorial pages of the *New York American* and the *Ladies' Home Journal*, about the rock on which democracy is founded, and things of that nature. Even when the author decides to be faintly satiric, she has a firm belief in Adrienne's fascinations. Two Englishmen fall in love with Adrienne; the first, Barney, marries her and shortly tires of her. Barney is a type rather more indigenous to New England than to Old England; his

Toryism is of the Colonial brand. The second Englishman to fall in love with Adrienne, a cynical, satirical, intellectual type, disliked her until, wounded in the war, he encounters her in a hospital where she is nursing, and falls a victim to her fascinations as the angel of the battle-field. He wants to marry her, but, consistently enough, if un-American enough, she decides that she can not in one life be wife to two men. Most of the conversation has a pleasantly intellectual flavour, not, however, too intellectual for consumption in the veranda of a summer hotel. Like many war-novels written since the end of the war, this book has a conscientious objector as a sort of sop to our disillusionment; the objector in this case dies in prison, which will make him less objectionable to those who are behind-hand in their recovery from war-hysteria. If Adrienne is not American, neither are the English characters really English; so that everybody all round is endowed impartially with impossible national characteristics. The English country gentry have more of a resemblance to those conservative standardized persons who summer in New Hampshire and Maine than to those almost equally conservative, sometimes stupid, but sometimes brilliantly imaginative and individualistic persons who own the smaller stately homes of England. The novel, however, can be recommended as being, on the whole, rather good summer reading, and it is written by a clever and practised hand.

M. M. C.

A REVIEWER'S NOTEBOOK.

"WORDS have a wide scope," says Homer, "Words may tend this way or that way." I have lately been looking over some current English essays on the progress of democracy, and they bring back Homer's saying very vividly before my mind. These essays show that democracy has given a poor account of itself and that its prospects are discouraging. They register after the fact the weaknesses and failures predicted of modern democracy by philosophical observers of republicanism in France and America, and they are not very hopeful that these weaknesses can be remedied or these failures retrieved. Democracy is easily victimized; it falls a ready prey to catchwords and claptrap; it is therefore guided by sentiment and not by reason. It chooses its agents badly, bringing to the top the lightest of demagogues. It progressively vulgarizes its civilization through putting a general premium of public favour upon mediocrity and pliability. Its organized political representation is weak and timid, and therefore upon occasion, corrupt and anarchical. Finally, its tyranny is excessive and irrational. Mr. Mencken said not long ago, in his energetic way, that law in the United States is in no sense associated with the idea of justice, but is merely an instrument for "getting" somebody or something that is unpopular. This view was anticipated by de Tocqueville with special reference to the United States and it gets considerable confirmation with reference to democracy in general from the essays that I have been reading.

THE passage from de Tocqueville is worth quoting. "The self-government and all-powerful sway of the majority," he says boldly, "is the greatest and most formidable evil in the United States. The reproach to which I conceive a democratic government, such as is there established, is open, is not, as many in Europe pretend, its weakness; it is, on the contrary, its irresistible strength. What I feel repugnance to in America is not the extreme liberty which reigns in it, but the slender guarantee which is to be found against tyranny. When a man or a party suffers from injustice springing from the majority in the United States, to whom can he apply for redress? To public opinion?—it is formed by the majority. To the legislative body?—it represents the majority and blindly obeys its mandates. To the Executive?—it is named by the majority and is a passive instrument in its hands. To the public force?—it is nothing but the majority under arms. To a jury?—it is the judicial committee of the majority. To the judges?—they are elected by the majority and hold office at its pleasure. How unjust and unreasonable soever may be the measure which strikes you, no redress is practicable."

¹ "Where the Pavement Ends." John Russell. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

² "The Prisoners of Hartling." J. D. Beresford. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$1.75.

³ "Adrienne Toner." Anne Douglas Sedgwick. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. \$2.00.

THIS prophecy, we may see, is a remarkable anticipation of Mr. Mencken's findings of fact. Another observer of ability, though perhaps a little less objective and dispassionate, Miss Martineau, prophesies in the same vein, saying that in the United States, "what is called public opinion has set up a despotism such as exists nowhere else . . . irresistible in its power to quell thought, repress action and silence conviction; bringing the timid perpetually under the unworthy fear of man, fear of some superior opinion which gets astride of the popular breath, for a day, and controls through imprudent folly, the speech and actions of the wise." Those who during the last eight years have sojourned under the representative "democratic" governmental systems of France, England and the United States, can abundantly bear out this statement. Finally, by way of getting an all-round view upon the matter, we find Mr. Jefferson saying that "this country which has given the world the example of physical liberty, owes it that of moral emancipation also; for as yet, it is but nominal with us. The inquisition of public opinion overwhelms in practice the freedom asserted by the laws in theory."

IN reading these predictions for the future of democracy, and in reading the general indictment which is now after the fact being brought against democracy, one can not help remarking the closeness of their correspondence. One can not wonder, therefore, at the uneasiness and depression which pervades modern thought about democracy. Self-government unquestionably meets and serves a true and vital instinct in mankind; the sense of individual responsibility and part-proprietorship in government is a very salutary thing, and much may be forgiven to a system which cultivates it. When Bismarck observed that a benevolent and rational absolutism is the best form of government, he was wrong, because such a system represses and paralyzes this sense. Nevertheless, one must observe that in the practical operation of democracy, this sense has been cultivated, in so far as it has been cultivated at all, at an exceedingly high cost; that other instincts which are nearly as fundamental, whose free play, at all events, is as necessary to the progress of civilization, have been steadily, often violently, contradicted in behalf of this sense. Moreover, it is a phenomenon of these latter days, and one which has apparently escaped the essayists whose works I have been reading, that after all the trouble and all the sacrifice, this sense is not noticeably well cultivated. Really, the citizen of the modern democracy does not appear to have any particularly strong and valid sense of proprietorship or even of participation in his system of government; and thus even the greatest argument for democracy turns out in practice to have only a negative kind of force, at best.

THERE is no doubt in my mind that we are on the point of making a re-examination of the word *democracy*, and a re-assessment of the reality that lies behind it—for no one who is even moderately acquainted with human nature and human history can doubt, I think, that a profound reality does lie behind it. The times are moving rapidly forward to where this re-assessment becomes imperative. I wish therefore that the men of letters who now show interest in the subject would anticipate this necessity by resolutely clearing the term, and by re-defining it if they find that re-definition is called for. Nothing would be more illuminating than that they should, when they discuss democracy, set forth explicitly what they mean by the term which they are discussing, and also consider whether their sense of the term is one which may any longer properly be used. One's mind plays sorry tricks upon one sometimes in this matter of the definition and use of terms. In the essays that I have been reading, the writers use the word *democracy* in a purely political sense, as it is used by Mr. Mencken and Mr. Woodrow Wilson, by Locke and Bentham.

They do not seem to entertain the possibility that a change in the general mode of current thought may have pretty well vacated the term of any significance of the kind. There was a time, for instance, when terms like *grace*, *faith*, *salvation*, were used quite exclusively in a theological sense; and when one so used them, one could get oneself measurably understood. But the *Zeitgeist* touched them, the general mode of current thought underwent a change, and the content of those terms had accordingly to be re-examined and re-appraised, and anyone who now uses them in the technical and theological sense can not any longer depend upon their conveying to a reader even approximately the meaning that he has in mind for them to convey.

So it seems to me that much of the current confusion about democracy would be cleared up, and—which is better—an enormous amount of misapprehension removed if, when these essayists, for example, have said their say, we should simply move the previous question. "The system which you talk about under the name of democracy," we might say, "no doubt has such and such defects, no doubt has given way here and broken down there. But is that actually democracy? No doubt the apprehensions of de Tocqueville about the civilization of the United States precisely hit the mark. But is there now or was there ever such a thing as democracy in the United States, except in a technical political sense? Did the people of the United States ever actually govern themselves, or do they now? Are the people of England any nearer the mark of actually governing themselves than they were before the great extension of the franchise made Mr. Lowe say with fine irony (or was it Mr. Disraeli?) 'We must now begin to educate our masters'? Have the people of France at this moment any more the collective mastery of their actual destiny than they had under Napoleon I? First tell us what, in your judgment, democracy is. What is its fundamental basis, and is this basis to be found in politics or elsewhere? Is, therefore, the democracy that you are talking about, actual or merely nominal democracy? Tell us these things, and then we shall be in shape to make up our minds about your conclusions."

It is not my purpose to intimate how I think these questions should be answered. I say only that they should be asked. They are, indeed, very important; for as long as they are not raised, the term *democracy* tends to remain fixed and rigid, as a mere piece of petrification obstructing the current of thought and resisting every effort to dissolve or dislodge it. As long as these questions are not raised, moreover, no accurate measure of the world's actual progress in civilization can be taken and no very encouraging view of the future can be entertained. I do not wonder that the essayists I have been reading are blue as whetstones. If democracy is merely the right of individual self-assertion in politics, if it has its basis in politics and is practically equivalent to an unlimited extension of the franchise—if we are shut up to that notion of democracy, then there is precious little hope for civilization. The outlook is even worse than the atrabilious imaginations of Mr. Mencken and the Dean of St. Paul's can portray it. But if democracy can be otherwise conceived of, if a new basis may be suggested for it, if a more logical and fairer prospect for its realization can be imagined as feasible, then without any self-deception or Pollyannaism, the future of the race may not be contemplated, perhaps, with utter dolefulness. The thing is worth trying. It never does any harm to throw ourselves and our mentors—especially ourselves—back upon definitions; and as I read these essays, I could not help thinking what a difference would have been made with them if some one had stood at the writers' elbow, continually saying, But what *is* democracy and what is its basis? Tell us this first, and then we shall have a clear road ahead.

POLITICS are transitory. Think back, those of you who can remember the battles of the parties for ten, twenty-five or fifty years, and recall the number of times (not less than once annually) that you were adjured to vote one way or the other in order to save the nation from collapse. The nation survived those campaigns, and it would have survived in precisely the same manner if the result had been the opposite of what it was in every political conflict.

Do you remember the issues which prompted one set of men to attack another set fiercely, with wind and gold and printer's ink? Of course not, but how great they seemed! You—blushing middle-aged man—once marched in a torchlight procession whose length was supposed to influence votes. And you—dodging behind this paper—did equally silly things in an attempt to make rational beings believe that one party's rule meant power and glory and the other's disgrace and ruin.

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